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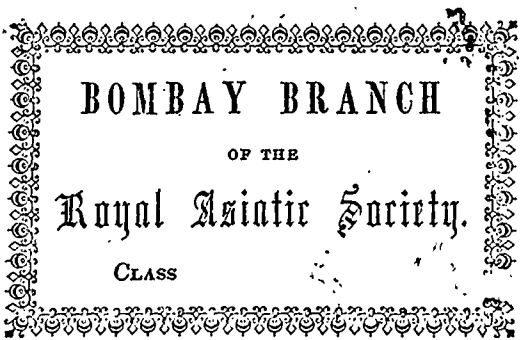

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DISQUISITION

ON

GOVERNMENT.

BY

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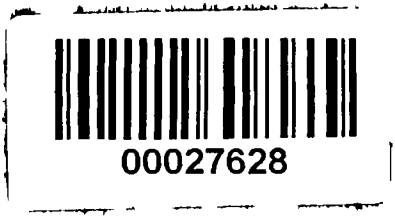

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In the preface to an Essay on the Distribution of Wealth, it has been mentioned that the present little work grew out of the former, and might be considered as following up certain political principles therein briefly touched upon. This may account for the appearance of two works by the Author almost at the same moment, and will, he hopes, be an excuse for the temerity of a first and two-fold attempt.

Edinburgh, *Nov.* 1836.

DISQUISITION ON GOVERNMENT.

When we take a general survey of the various changes which have occurred in the political condition of those States whose history is best known to us, it is impossible not to be struck with one very remarkable conclusion. We find that these changes are all reducible to two grand general movements directly opposed to each other, and which at different times have alternately presided over the destinies of nations. By the one, the sphere of political influence has gradually been extended from the omnipotence of a single individual, or at most of a very few, till at last it has embraced the whole, or a very considerable portion of the community. Arrived at this point, the movement, being no longer possible in the same direction, has begun to retrace its steps. Political power has been with-

drawn from the mass of the people—has by degrees been shared by a smaller and smaller number, till finally it has centred in the dominion of one. This is the general view which the history of nations presents to us in the past, and which consequently affords a probability that the same will occur in future.

In the progress, however, of this movement, one very remarkable difference presents itself. In some countries, many centuries elapsed before these series of changes were gone through; while in others, at particular periods, they have all been most rapidly passed over in the course of a very few years. In the former cases, since the movement was slow, it was also steady, and unaccompanied with any violent shocks; while in the latter, it has been marked by the most frightful and wide-spreading convulsions. We find, moreover, that the ascending series of changes, has generally been more rapid than the descending; in other words, that the progress from an unlimited monarchy, or small oligarchy, to pure democracy, has been more gradual than the opposite tendency.

It appears, then, from the most ample evidence of past ages, that the general law of nature, that nothing is stationary, applies no less

to the Political than to the Moral and Material world. This being once granted, it will follow, that from the very fact of a nation having gone as far as it can in one direction, it must be expected soon to adopt a contrary course. To stand still is impossible; to advance no less so; it remains, then, but to recede. This latter tendency is besides explained by the circumstance also proved by experience, that when once any single power has drawn to itself all the sources of authority, it fails not speedily to abuse its over-grown and unlimited dominion. These excesses naturally turn the minds of thinking men in an opposite direction, and lead them, in the one case, to curb the power of a democracy; in the other, that of a single despot. The blow thus struck, if successful, paves the way for another of the same kind, which again facilitates a further change. To hurl a stone down a mountain side, may require at first a prodigious effort, but once pushed from its place, it bounds along the plane with a rapidly accelerating movement. So is it with political changes.

Two principles of human nature may serve to explain this—the influence of Success, and the force of Sympathy. How much the minds of men are swayed by the former, we all know.

Indeed, with the vulgar, that is, the mass of mankind, it is sufficient to cover a multitude of sins. The most desolating of conquerors, the most notorious of usurpers, if successful, is sure to meet with the applauses of many, and the entire condemnation of but very few. How much more, then, if the cause be really a good one!

The force of Sympathy is no less important. The circumstance of any body of men, particularly persons of rank or property, having adopted certain ideas, affords of itself a probability of their spreading. Nothing else can explain the rapid changes of opinion in certain countries, in revolutionary times. It is impossible to suppose that the great mass of adult citizens can, in a moment, that is in a very few years, altogether modify their modes of thinking, from simple reason and reflection. Reason and reflection are far too slow for such sudden effects. The principle by which, as we know, emotions are so rapidly communicated through any large assembly, can alone explain those quick revolutions of ideas which are generally found to precede and accompany revolutions in government. When the States General were first called together under Louis XVI., would not any one

have been thought crazy who should have predicted that a nation which had all along been accustomed to royalty, and loved the splendour and gaiety of a court, should, in four short years, have not only abolished monarchy, and annihilated the aristocracy, but have proclaimed the principle of universal equality, and pursued with implacable hatred even the least offensive of social distinctions? And however much I may congratulate myself and country on the success of Reform in Great Britain, can we justly suppose that all those who afterwards so sturdily supported the measure, had previously made up their minds on that important subject? By no means. Very many, probably the majority, were converted to Reform for the first time in their lives, by the Revolution of July, and the speeches of his Majesty's ministers. How else can we explain the passiveness of the people on the question of a reform even of the lower house, prior to 1830, as compared with their eagerness for it after; and that those who half a dozen years ago, scarcely raised their voice in favour of a change in the Commons, should now set up a cry against the constitution of the Lords? The influence of Success, and the force of Sympathy, can alone account for this sudden conversion.

At first, no doubt, these principles were pushed on to action by the example of a triumphant revolution in a neighbouring country; and when once desires were roused, and their accomplishment thought possible from the encouragement held out by the ministry itself, the victory was already won. For, besides the influence of Success upon the opinions of men, it has also a mighty effect in raising their hopes. Since our desires are insatiable, the gratification of one is but a prelude to another; and the very circumstance that our former efforts have been crowned with success, gives a degree of confidence that future ones shall be so likewise. Thus, in revolutionary times, the people are led on step by step from one conquest to another, till at length they come to make demands, which, had they simply been mentioned a few years before, would have excited not only general surprise, but probably ridicule or indignation. This must be familiar to any one who has followed attentively the history of such periods.

But to return from this digression. If the principles above laid down be correct, it follows, that, supposing popular power to be extended as far as the most extravagant democrat could wish, it is to the last degree improbable that such a

state of things should endure, even though we suppose the country to be placed in circumstances the most favourable to republican institutions. As there must be movement, and as that on the popular side can go no farther, a contrary one cannot but ensue. This, then, is an argument *in limine* against a pure Democracy.

Let us take a general view of the political changes which have succeeded each other in some of the most remarkable of ancient and modern states, from which I have been led to draw the above conclusions.

Imperfect as are the early annals of Athens, they are sufficient to inform us, that monarchy was originally its form of government, and that after the death of Codrus, hereditary Archons took the place of kings.* There can be no doubt that these new magistrates were more limited in power than their regal predecessors. But after this form of rule had lasted, as we are told, more than three hundred years, another change took place still farther extending the sphere of political authority. The archonship was rendered elective, and its duration limited to ten years.

* B. C. 1092. Other accounts give, B. C. 1069.

Scarcely a century later, nine archons were chosen instead of one, and their continuance in office restricted to one year only. When we come down to the time of Solon, we find the people possessed of great power; for the democratic constitution set up by that lawgiver could only regulate the exercise of an authority already existing. Still, though by this act, the fourth tribe, consisting of the poorer people, had the right of voting in the popular assemblies, it was altogether excluded from the magistracy. The sanction of the Senate was moreover necessary to the passing of laws. After this, the popular current was arrested for a time in its course, and a contrary movement ensued. The talents and attractions of Pisistratus were fatal for a period to democratic supremacy. This was but a partial incident, however; for after the fall of his family, the former tendency revived, the popular assemblies assumed the right of making laws without consulting the senate, and the movement was at last consummated by the law of Aristides, passed after the battle of Platæa, (B. C. 479) by which all citizens, without distinction of fortune, became eilgible to every office and dignity. This might have been very well under a system of *election*, but so far was carried the popular

jealousy of superiority, that not only the senate, but all the magistrates, not excepting even the Archons, were now chosen by *lot*. This, certainly, is the most complete instance of *levelling* on record. According to this system, not fortune only, but even superior worth and talents, all went for nothing, and the most ordinary, or least instructed citizen, had as much chance of being senator or judge, provided his conduct was free from glaring reproach, as the most virtuous and enlightened.* But the influence of the mass was, if possible, still farther increased by Pericles, through opposition to his rival Cimon; and by the degradation of the Arcopagus was the last barrier removed.

Accordingly, the star of Athens soon began to wane. The ill-advised and unhappy expedition to Sicily, and the otherwise bad success of the Peloponnesian war, reduced the republic to the brink of ruin. That highly-talented but fickle democracy was no match for the steady bravery and consistent counsels of its more aristocratic rival. And although, after the expulsion of the

* The practice of choosing magistrates by *lot*, the *Signori* and *Gonfaloniere della Justizia*, for instance, prevailed also in the republic of Florence. See Machiavel Istor. Fior. passim.

thirty tyrants, the Athenians recovered their liberty, yet they did not enjoy it for any great length of time. What might have been the *euthanasia* of this government had foreign power not interposed, can, of course, be a subject for conjecture only, since it was not allowed to die a natural death. In vain the noble eloquence of Demosthenes aroused the declining energies of his countrymen. A power too great to be resisted was rapidly rising in the North, to threaten the independence of all the states of Greece. Those arms, which, in better days, had firmly withstood the innumerable hosts of Persia, were doomed to sink beneath the upstart monarch of a single province. Even at this day, such a catastrophe fails not to excite our emotions; and the traveller who has felt his spirit bound within him on visiting the plains of Marathon, can scarcely refrain from a tear on treading those of Chæronea.

Let us now turn to the annals of Rome, which afford a still more perfect exemplification of the principles above laid down. The history of that celebrated city, for upwards of 600 years from its foundation, is marked by a steady but continued increase of the popular power. The first very striking event in favour of this tenden-

cy, was the expulsion of the kings. U. C. 240. After this occurrence, the stream set with constantly increasing force towards an extension of the rights of the plebeians, at the expence of the privileges of the patricians. The creation of the Tribunes of the people deserves to be particularly remarked. Afterwards, every magistracy which at first had been exclusively reserved for the higher orders; Consuls, Prætors, Quæstors, Curule Ædiles, Censors, and Dictators, became one by one accessible to all classes of society.* The *comitia tributa*, or assemblies of the people by tribes, were in many cases substituted for those by *centuries*, the rich having far greater influence in the latter than in the former, in which the vote of one man, however poor, was as good as that of another, however rich. Besides, for the decrees passed by these *comitia*, (Plebiscita) the sanction of the senate was not required. By and by, 416 years after the foundation of the city, under the dictatorship of Publius Philo, a law was passed by which the senate was obliged to ratify the resolutions of the assemblies by centuries. Thus that body ceased to be a part of the legislature, and became limit-

* These changes were completed a little more than 400 years after the foundation of Rome.

ed to executive functions. Nor must it be omitted, that latterly, secret suffrage, or vote by ballot, was introduced in the popular assemblies; u. c. 614. In 621, another law to the same effect was passed.

The tendency of all these changes, it clearly appears, was to widen the basis of political influence, gradually more and more. Nor was it till more than 600 years had elapsed, that this movement was at length arrested. The nobles who had parted with their exclusive privileges, if not without a struggle, at least without serious riot or bloodshed, becoming at last alarmed for their property, which they conceived endangered by the plans of the Gracchi, quickly rose in arms and massacred their opponents. This was a fatal blow.* From this moment the political stream

* In the history of this critical event, a fact presents itself too important to be passed over in silence, as of itself a strong proof—if indeed proof were wanting, that, previous to this period, the use of arms in civil disputes was a practice quite unknown to the Romans. Notwithstanding the exasperated state of both parties when the elder Gracchus met his death, neither of them seem to have had any regular weapons. The people on a sudden snatched the staves from the officers that attended the tribunes; and the senators, when at the instigation of Scipio Nasica, they moved in a body against Tiberius and his associates, were armed only

began to set in an opposite direction. Power became gradually centred in fewer and fewer hands, being held at one time by the tribunes and a factious minority of the people, at another by the heads of the senate; it was caught at by Marius, and actually possessed for a time by Scylla and Cæsar, till at last every authority became prostrate before the incontestable supremacy of Augustus. And let us well observe, that whereas it took upwards of 600 years for the popular current to run its course, during which, the movement was comparatively slow, steady, and free from excesses, 100 sufficed to bring back Rome from its farthest point of democracy to imperial despotism. This was the exact period from the murder of Tiberius Gracchus to the battle of Actium, a

with the shafts of the fasces, broken benches, and whatever fell immediately in their way; while their sole defence consisted in their robes wound up on the left arm instead of shields. And to prove how soon one example of violence produces its effect, and leads from bad to worse, when, only twelve years afterwards, Caius Gracchus and his followers fell victims to the aristocratic party, we find both sides already provided with real arms. So that, whereas in the former affray only three hundred of the populace were killed, on the latter occasion upwards of three thousand were massacred. This was a fit introduction to the still more bloody acts of Marius and Scylla.

period too, marked by civil war, massacre, and proscription.

The history of Florence tells a similar tale. From the commencement of the thirteenth century, when first it rose into independence, down to the year 1378, the people seem to have been constantly rising into power. At first, the nobles appear to have had great sway, but by their own desperate dissensions they shook the fabric of their strength, and laid themselves open to the attacks of their common enemy. In 1343, they were completely defeated after a bloody conflict in the streets of Florence, and for ever deprived not only of all privileges, but even of equality of rights. After this, the more wealthy of the middle classes, the *popolani grandi*, seem to have held the reins of government, till at length they also were obliged to yield to the attacks of the *plebe*, or lower orders of the people. Democracy had now found its limit. It had succeeded in raising a wool-carder to the chief magistracy of the state, but could not long keep him there.* The very leader chosen by itself was obliged to curb its exaggerated pretensions, and after a most turbulent period of three years, the government

* Michele di Lando.

again fell into the hands of a higher class of citizens. The retrograde movement had thus commenced, nor stopped till step by step it drew all power from the people, and finally brought it under the sole dominion of the wealthy house of Medici.

If from ancient and foreign States, we turn to modern times and the history of our own country, we shall read a similar lesson. From the period of the Conquest down to our own days, the general tendency has unquestionably been to extend the sphere of political influence, though occasionally some partial movements may have taken place in an opposite direction. The triumphs of the barons over John and Henry III. the signing of Magna Charta, the calling of burgesses to Parliament, the force employed against Edward II., all shew clearly this general progress. Afterwards, no doubt, the wars of the two Roses, by greatly weakening the aristocracy, went to increase the power of the crown, and prepared the despotic reigns of the last two Henrys. On the death of these monarchs, however, the political current began to take its old inclination, though slowly at first, and above all, greatly stemmed by the talents of the virgin queen. But under

the more feeble sceptre of her successor, it gradually rose to a powerful stream, which, in the following reign, overcame all barriers, and swept before it both the church and the throne. Thus far democracy had run its course. But it did not long enjoy its conquests. A rapidly ascending movement now succeeded, which soon placed a nominal Protector on a real throne. After the death of Cromwell, and the restoration of Charles II. a period of hesitation succeeded, that for a while left it doubtful which way the tide might turn. The opposing parties seemed at first pretty equally balanced; and for a moment it might have been thought that the crown would gain the day. But in the next reign, the combat was decided in favour of the people. By the revolution of 1688, and the Bill of Rights, the power of the aristocracy, and even of the nation at large, received an immense increase. Nor have the effects of that event yet ceased. By slow and often imperceptible degrees, have the people grown more and more into importance, during the last 140 years. Since the peace of 1815 especially, this tendency has become very remarkable; and since 1829, the movement has been so accelerated, as almost to wear the aspect of revolution. The power of

the crown being no longer an object of fear, the aristocracy has become the point of attack; and a body which once was considered the greatest bulwark of liberty, is now looked upon as its mortal enemy.

Independently of the general progress which the above sketch presents to us, we thus perceive, that in one short period, both the descending and ascending movements were gone through with wonderful rapidity. From the commencement of the reign of Charles I.—a king whose power was certainly very great—down to his execution, and the establishment of a commonwealth, and from thence up to the unlimited power of Cromwell, a few brief years elapsed.

But to a neighbouring country must we especially look for an example of every change run through with marvellous speed. In four years, political power passed from the hands of a monarch, limited by custom only, by law despotic, into those of the clubs, and the lowest populace of the capital. The crowded suburbs of Paris, inhabited solely by the working classes, for a time gave law to France. In vain should we look into history for any change comparable to this. But such a state of things could not long continue. By the fall of Robespierre, the

revolutionary torrent was arrested, and a contrary movement instantly began. The formidable suburbs were disarmed, the Sections vanquished, the Councils decimated by the Directory, alternately to curb the violence of the democrats, and the rising hopes of the royalists. The government had become truly military, even before the mighty Corsican seized in his vigorous grasp the helm of state. In vain the specious phantom of a Triumvirate was set up to amuse the simple multitude. The empty shadows vanished at the magician's will, and the Consular laurels served but to decorate an Imperial diadem.

After the restoration of the Bourbons, a doubtful state of affairs succeeded, very similar to what occurred in England on the return of Charles II. It seemed uncertain for a time, whether the royalist or popular party was to gain the ascendancy. But the general election of November 1827 decided the conflict. From this moment the current set strongly in favour of democracy, nor stopped, till meeting with an obstinate and blind resistance, it once more hurled from their seats a triple generation of kings.

If we now turn our eyes across the Atlantic, to that vast republic, which stretches over six

and twenty States, some of them as large as England, brief as are its annals, we shall still find room for reflection. The popular movement, ever since the close of the war of independence, has been rapidly progressing in America. At first, the federalist, or more aristocratic party, had very considerable influence, headed, as it was, by the admirable Washington, the greatest of patriots, and most unsullied of men. For a short time, the Senate even debated with closed doors, and the constitutions of many of the States were not strictly popular. But after the immediate successor of Washington had descended from the president's chair, which was occupied in his stead by Mr. Jefferson, democracy began to carry all before it. The State constitutions have in general been reformed, some of them more than once since the beginning of the century, till at last universal suffrage and vote by ballot have in many instances become the law of the land.*

Since the election of General Jackson, the most democratic party has gained still greater sway, and by the destruction of the United

* This is the case, in particular, in the most important of all the States, New York.

States Bank, contrived still more to weaken the influence of the central government. This movement, however, can now scarcely go much farther; and indeed, recent events tend to prove that soon it must meet a check. When a government can no longer protect the lives and properties of its subjects, when the authors of pillage and murder escape with perfect impunity, we may be sure that some great changes will ere long ensue, to strengthen the arm of power. I allude, of course, to the late disgraceful proceedings against the slavery abolitionists, so calculated to strike with grief and dismay every well-wisher to the cause of free government, and human improvement.

These numerous facts, derived from the history of different nations and periods very remote from each other, sufficiently prove, as it appears to me, the truth of the general principles enounced in the commencement of this disquisition. Let us now, however, take a more particular view of the various possible forms of government.

In these parts of the world, we have a very imperfect idea of what a real Democracy is. On this side of the Atlantic, what is called public

opinion, is the opinion of the higher classes, which gradually is communicated to their inferiors in station, and which, at all events, whether it be participated in or not by the absolute majority of the nation, still is the ruling power that sways the counsels of government, and dictates laws both political and moral. It must however be remarked, that this body whose opinion is all-powerful, forms a much more numerous portion of the whole society in some countries of Europe than in others; in England and France, for instance, than in Austria and Russia. Still, it is every where a minority. In America, on the contrary, it is the majority who actually govern; the small proprietors of land, artizans, mechanics, and labourers of all descriptions, make the law, and give the peculiar colour to moral sentiment. There can, I think, be little doubt, that the prodigious progress of America, since its revolution especially, is to be attributed, in a great degree, to the energy caused by this overflowing of democracy. This I conceive to be a grand truth. The government of the United States has favoured the natural development of the riches of a people possessed of a fertile and boundless territory, not merely by the security of person and property

which it has maintained. This has of course been much, but by no means all of the advantage derived from the political institutions of that country. Democratical energy has done wonders. This I conceive to be one peculiar feature of democracy in general, energy. The source of this it will not be difficult to discover. Where every man finds that by his own exertions alone, he may hope to attain to eminence in whatever line he chooses to follow, where he is kept down neither by the positive institutions of society, nor yet by the haughty disdain of the noble and the rich, where he has to court neither the patronage of the great, which humiliates while it protects, nor to overcome the unfavourable opinion so often attached to a low origin; there, we may well believe, will a stimulus be given to the mind, the consequences of which will be felt throughout the whole of the community. Wherever institutions really popular have prevailed, there accordingly we shall find displayed an extraordinary energy.

Look at ancient Athens. In it we have a specimen of the most purely democratical government that ever existed; and therefore we must here expect to find the good and evil of that state of society displayed in the fullest pos-

sible light. Extreme cases are highly valuable on this account, that by them we arrive at the consequences of any system in itself, disengaged from counteracting causes. Athens was more completely a popular state than even America; for in the former, the people in a body were the legislators, not by delegating their power to a few among themselves, but by their own individual votes. Whatever some writers may say, there can, I think, be no question, that representation is in all cases, a real limitation of the democratical principle, absolutely necessary no doubt in all large communities, but not the less, on that account, an infringement on popular supremacy. When elections are even annual, the people give up their power for one year at least; and laws may be passed during that period, and executed also, which are in opposition to the wishes of the majority. There is an immense difference between an assembly of three or four hundred picked men, and a meeting of many thousands of all ranks, down to the very lowest.

Athens, then, is the most perfect instance we have of a purely democratical government. And what were its characteristic qualities? Energy, astonishing energy; and rashness its accompany-

ing evil. The peculiar turn which this energy took was two-fold, literary and warlike. The achievements in arts and letters which illustrated the best days of Athens, are indeed most wonderful, especially for so small a state; and its exertions in war were scarcely less surprising. The history of this remarkable city stands alone in the annals of the world; neither before nor since has it any parallel; a city which in the expressive language of Gibbon, "with a population of about 30,000 males, condensed within the period of a single life, the genius of ages and of millions." But it shone like a meteor only for a moment, and then sank into obscurity, consumed by itself. Its very energy carried to excess, wore it out prematurely. Wars were undertaken on a scale quite unsuited to so limited a population; and the failure of these, nay, even their success, gave a death-blow to the little republic. Rashness, turbulence, and inconstancy, which are the evil qualities of democracy, pushed it on to its ruin.

But whatever may have been the merits of the Athenian government, there is one circumstance which deserves to be noticed, to prevent misconception as to its real nature. We must not forget, that during the bright days of Athens, al-

most all manual labour was performed by slaves. So that not only the number of citizens was very limited, but these being in general free from bodily toil, had ample leisure for cultivating their mental faculties, and studying political affairs. This, it is evident, makes an essential difference between that celebrated republic, and any modern civilised state.

And here I cannot help remarking a circumstance in the social economy of the Athenians, to which something of their extraordinary acquirements may be traced. This is nothing else than their comparative indifference to the charms of domestic life. However favourable domestic habits may be to morals, and consequently to human happiness, there can be little doubt that they tend to promote indolence, wherever a necessity for exertions with a view to increase of fortune does not exist.* This is the only motive to activity which the love of home supplies. That necessity once done away with, the satisfaction and annoyance which arise from domesticity, are alike opposed to intellectual improvement. By filling the soul with one species

* An expression which I lately met in a French publication, "le paisible engourdissement du menage," exactly comes up to my idea.

of interest, whether pleasing or painful, they occupy its capacity, and prevent that feeling of a void which is one of the strongest incentives to exertion. The capacity of the human mind being necessarily limited, the more it is occupied with one set of ideas or sentiments, the less can it be filled with others; so that if much taken up with domestic objects, the less, we may be sure, will it be absorbed by intellectual pursuits. Could we suppose twenty or thirty thousand individuals met together in one small spot, with no end in life but the advancement of the arts and sciences, having plenty of time at their command, free from family cares, meeting daily in public and in private, and constantly stimulated by each other's excellence; it is impossible to say to what a pitch of perfection the mind of man might attain.

But to return. Within the last fifty years, France has offered to the world a grand example of the advantages and disadvantages of popular sway. Assuredly, the vast energy displayed by that nation in defending the country against hosts of enemies, both within and without, is to be attributed to the overflowing of democracy. Whatever may have been the faults of the Convention, it was the most energetic government that

ever existed. An impulse once given, the effect may continue for some time after the cause has ceased. Thus the spirit roused by the Revolution survived the loss of liberty, and gave that engine which the genius of Napoleon was destined to guide. And we have seen the consequences. Rashness, before unheard of, entailed upon France a series of calamities, such as rarely fall to the lot of any nation.

The energies of the American democracy have taken a different direction; it has not given itself up to letters and the arts, and having no neighbours, wars were impossible. The popular vigour has been shewn in turning to account a rich and extensive virgin territory, and instead of prodigies of genius and of valour, we have prodigies of industry.* It must be granted, that even after making all allowances for natural advantages, the progress of the United States is quite unparalleled in the history of the world. The Americans are in commerce the most enterprising of men. To such an extent do they carry that spirit, that bankruptcies are far more common there than in any other country.

* Take for instance the unexampled extension of canals and rail-roads throughout the Union.

The peculiar advantages to be expected from democratic governments are, equality of rights, security for person and property against the oppression of the great, and energy. The disadvantages to which it is especially liable, are inconstancy, rashness, and confusion. The peculiar good of aristocratical sway, is its stability and its constancy; it is truly conservative; less energetic, but more secure: fonder of the *statu quo* than of trying experiments, loving what *is*, rather than what *may* be. The grand evil which belongs to it, is, its tendency to oppression. Democracy and aristocracy, in their most distinctive features, may be expressed by two words, the movement and the resistance.

We may remark as a general truth applicable to the human mind, that the great Author of nature, in the conformation of the immaterial part of man, seems to have had especially in view, so to balance the various principles of his constitution, that no one should have an unlimited sway. Hence arises the very contradiction and inconsistency so constantly observed even in the most regulated minds. No principle of action exists without its antagonist. Thus the love of self is opposed by the love of others; love of the present, by love of the future; love of native

country, by love of human kind; love of continuation, by love of change or contrast; even benevolence has its antagonist malevolence. Of the wisdom of this state of things, as of all the other works of nature, we can have no doubt, nor, in the present case, is it difficult to assign a reason for this arrangement. Where one principle so completely gains the pre-eminence as to subdue all its opponents, man is in great danger of becoming either mad or a pest to society. In fact, we know that the most common cause of derangement is the harping continually on one subject, and hence the chief remedy consists in turning the attention to other topics. When the predominance of one principle in the mind does not lead to insanity, it frequently is productive of the most gigantic evil. Whence have arisen all the calamities which conquerors have inflicted on the world? Whence, but from the exclusive dominion of ambition over their minds? of ambition which subdued the love of ease, fear of danger, and even the common sentiments of humanity? In like manner, a man in whom love of gain had gained the mastery over every other feeling or passion, would be dangerous as a wild beast, and unfit for the society of mankind.

Unquestionably, nothing great can be done

without a ruling passion, that is, one in general stronger than any other, but it does not therefore follow, that it should annihilate all its antagonists. These may check it, and prevent its excesses, fatal to the individual, as well as to the rest of the world.

Thus we see that the mind of man is in truth a balanced machine, the weights are not all on one side. Were there any one principle, which, it may be thought, might with safety rule supereminent, it would be that of benevolence. But there cannot be a doubt that even this requires to be checked, and that a man actuated by it alone, if he escaped derangement, would probably do more harm than good. At all events, were such a mode of conduct to become general, and each man to desert his own interests out of regard to those of his neighbour, there is no question but the happiness of the world would suffer on the whole.

Now to apply this to the present case.

Whatever may be the principle on which the government is founded, whether the democratical, aristocratical, or monarchical, if left unchecked, it will run to its own destruction, and that of the state. Democracies will perish from the effects of their own rashness, inconstancy, and

turbulence; aristocracies and monarchies, though of longer duration, will at last fall from their hatred to improvement, and the oppression with which they afflict the people. A balanced government is then the one most adapted to the nature of the human mind, and therefore the best. By the union of aristocracy and democracy we obtain the energy of the one, and the steadiness of the other; change, if desirable, without turbulence; constancy without immoveability.

I do not say that the energy of a mixed government will be as great as that of a pure democracy, or that there will not be more room for abuse and oppression on the part of the great; but devise what we may, in no human institution can we avoid all evils, we have it only in our power to choose the least. Now, even the energy of republican governments is apt to run into an extreme, and prematurely to exhaust the state, as was the case with Athens. And where democracy enters largely into the management of affairs, the corruptions and oppressions of the aristocracy will not fail to be denounced, and sooner or later put a stop to. The mixed government then contains within itself a principle of self-correction, and the evils above mentioned

are not likely to become so great and so general as to affect the vitals of the state. Whereas, the rashness, inconstancy, and turbulence of purely popular governments, convulse the whole body politic, and perpetually endanger the very existence of liberal institutions.

But there is still another view of human nature which will serve to shew that a mixed government, one of attack and resistance, is most suited to the actual state of man.

It may, I think, be laid down as an axiom, proved by universal experience, that no person, child, boy, or man, can bear to be unopposed, without having his temper and disposition spoilt in consequence. In children we find that the more we attempt to gratify all their wishes, the more we insist upon their never being thwarted, the more and more difficult does it become to please them; and when at last it becomes necessary to make some opposition to their will, they break out into a furious passion, discharging their puny rage against their mother, nurse, or any one who has vexed them.

> "The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart
> Goes all decorum."

As it is with the child, so with the man. The

habit of never being controlled, and of finding every one yield to his desires, engenders caprice, inconstancy, and discontent within himself, which he vents in tyranny towards others. It is only the wholesome check of opposition applied in due time which forces him to curb the natural waywardness of his disposition, and to restrain his unruly passions, making him thus happy in his own mind, and amiable to all around. But a person who has long been accustomed to have his own way in every thing, considers the slightest resistance to his will as a heinous offence which can hardly be too severely punished.

That this is the fact will scarcely be denied. The history of all governments, where the supreme authority has been concentred in the hands of one, abounds with innumerable instances of cruelties the most revolting, perpetrated even where no interest prompted, except the gratification of the passion or passing whim of the moment. Alexander, a monarch certainly not by nature of a bad disposition, slew his friend Clitus in a fit of phrenzy; and we are told that even Nero was in his youth of a very mild character. But no frame of mind can withstand the spoiling influence of irresponsible power.

To give one some idea of the ultimate effects

of this cause, we must open the annals of Persia, where the Shah slays and mutilates his subjects from motives so very trivial, as scarcely to be conceived by ordinary men. These deeds are to be accounted for, not from any calculation of interest, but merely from the caprice of the instant, which the potentate has never been accustomed to curb, no, not for an hour.*

Now what is true of an individual, is likewise so of any body of men. In the one case as in the other, unlimited power necessarily leads to oppression. And this it is that explains how there may be a tyranny of the Many, as well as of One or a Few, and accounts for the various instances thereof which occur in history; for the injustice of the Athenian democracy towards her best citizens, and the judicial massacres of the French revolution. The people, no more than an individual, can bear the absence of effectual opposition without being corrupted. As in the case of a spoilt child who always behaves the worst to those who have been most indulgent to it, so, the more the democracy has been courted

* Tacitus considers Vespasian as the only instance of a prince who had grown better in the exercise of power. "Solus omnium ante se Principum in melius mutatus est." Hist. lib. i. cap. 50.

and flattered by its leaders, the more certainly does it fall upon them on their attempting in the least degree to resist its will. How exceedingly evanescent is the popularity of revolutionary chiefs! The idol of to-day is broken in pieces to-morrow, to make way for another, itself to be as speedily crushed under the chariot wheels of its successor.

Were it not for the principle above stated, it might seem strange how there could be any tyranny on the part of the Many. The people can have no interest in oppression and misrule; on the contrary, they cannot but suffer from them. How then can they be guilty of cruelty and injustice? The answer is now evident. The ills inflicted by the people on their fellows arise not from any calculation of interest to be derived to themselves from such acts of tyranny, but from bursts of passion fostered by the absence of control. This cause of misrule is common to all governments in which one power exists unchecked by any other, and belongs alike to democracies, aristocracies, and unlimited monarchies. To the two last, however, is attached another and more constant source of tyranny, the interest which the individual or oligarchy has in oppressing the people. The cruelty of which this is

the cause will be of a more cool, calculating, systematic nature, than that which flows from the indulgence of temporary passion.

The particular principle of human nature here dwelt upon, serves, then, to prove the same conclusion which we before arrived at from a consideration of the general frame of the mind, namely, that the best governments are those where the power is divided between opposing forces, and in the composition of which the aristocratical and democratical elements are blended in due proportion.

And here some other reflections present themselves. It will, I think, be granted as a fact proved by general experience, that uneducated men are particularly liable to passion. The effect of instruction is to improve the judgment, while it curbs the influence of impetuous desire; to enlighten the mind as to its true interest, and restrain those passing ebullitions by which this might be endangered. If crimes arising from thirst of gain do not always diminish in number with the progress of civilization, those at least which result from anger and revenge occur less frequently. This is one of the most marked dis-

tinctions between savage and cultivated communities.

The conclusion I am induced to draw from the above fact is this, that governments in which the mass of the people enjoy the greatest share of political power, who from the necessity of the case are the least instructed, will be much more exposed to misrule from bursts of passion, than those in which the chief authority is placed in fewer hands. Aristocracies may be oppressive, pitiless, hard as the nether mill-stone, but they pursue not their own interest only, but also that of the state, where these are not inconsistent, with wonderful coolness and sagacity. In foreign policy this superiority is particularly apparent. On such occasions, uniformity of views is of such importance, that without it no lasting success can be had. It is here especially that the fickle counsels of the multitude, swayed this way and that as passion dictates, are truly most disastrous. Few things require a more comprehensive mind, a more unbiassed judgment, in a word, a more cool and calculating head, than accurately to fix on the best line of conduct for a great nation to adopt in its relations with other states. Can we then suppose the multitude to be fit arbiters of such important and difficult affairs, even though

popular passions did not interfere to warp their decisions?

A democratic assembly may be good enough judges of the foreign interests, (if foreign they may be called,) of a small Swiss canton; but where the policy of a great people is concerned, whose actions may have an influence on the world in general, can we really suppose that the mass, who of necessity must spend most of their time in gaining their daily bread, can hold with a clear eye and a steady unbiassed hand, the scales on which may depend the destinies of millions?

Experience most fully confirms this superiority of aristocratic governments in respect to foreign policy, over those of every other description, whether purely democratical or monarchical. No states have ever been so successful in their relations with other countries, as ancient Rome, Venice, Great Britain, and Russia, whose career is now perhaps only commencing. In all these governments the aristocratical element has been largely blended. Athens, with all its genius, with all its energy, was unequal in the long-run to its less inconstant competitor, whose constitution, founded on an union of the three powers, was remarkable among all the states of Greece

for its wonderful stability.* Nay, the very circumstance of aristocratic governments being generally detested by their neighbours, is so far a proof of their ability in promoting the interests of the country over which they are placed. Rome, I have no doubt, was pretty well hated by all around it, and so was Venice. England, likewise, it would be vain to deny, has always been highly unpopular with the nations of the continent, on account of its foreign policy, entirely and uniformly tending to its own aggrandizement. Towards Russia the same feeling is now spreading generally.

Aristocracies, least of all, are liable to be swayed from what they consider their interest, by enthusiasm or generous feeling. The people, on the contrary, are very apt to be led away by these sudden impulses; and however much we may admire those noble aspirations in private life, it seems more than doubtful how far they are suited to the management of the affairs of a great nation. An isolated individual may be at liberty to risk both his fortune and life in some generous enterprise, but it can seldom if ever be allowable for the rulers of a state thus to play with the dearest interests of their countrymen.

* See Note A.

The example of France during its great Revolution affords a most striking instance of the unfitness of a democracy for conducting the foreign policy of an important kingdom. By the madness of the popular leaders, their utter ignorance of diplomacy, and their disregard to conciliate any one power, they brought down all Europe upon their unfortunate country. And though the same state of things which stirred up so vast an invasion, gave at the same time the energy to resent it, would it not have been better had so tremendous a collision been moderated at least, if not prevented?

If ever there was a calculating democracy, it is surely that of America. But so far are popular passions carried in that country, (of which, strange to say, admiration for military glory is one,) that we have seen a person chosen to fill the President's chair, for no good reason that can be assigned, but because he happened to be victor in rather a celebrated engagement. It is well known that to this General Jackson is indebted for so signal an honour. Accordingly, the talents he has displayed since his elevation to the highest office in the government, have been such as become the intrepid commander, rather than the wise and dignified statesman. In vain all the

merits of a man* well tried in diplomacy and civil affairs were brought in opposition to the General; one thing was wanting to secure success, the halo of military renown.

With nations as well as individuals, steadiness in the pursuit of an object generally gains the day. On this principle depend the merits of aristocratic government in their foreign relations. For it is not sufficient that this constancy be shewn for a single generation only, but must be handed down from father to son as an invariable rule of conduct. In the case of an unlimited monarchy, even if hereditary, too much depends upon individual caprice; in that of a pure democracy, too much on the no less variable passions of the multitude. Aristocracies, however, being composed of the most instructed portion of the community, are therefore less led by sudden emotions, and transmitting their possessions unbroken from one generation to another, for that very reason, perpetuate their principles also. For permanence of families leads to steadiness of ideas, as much as oblivion of ancestry and division of property to inconstancy of views, and change of practice.

In truth, a pure democracy, supposing it real,

* Mr. Clay.

not nominal, that is, that the mass of the people do really give the law, may be shortly described as the rule of numbers over intellect. Educate the people as we may, still, so long as they are obliged to labour for their subsistence, so long must the want of *leisure*, that indispensable condition of mental culture, prevent them from competing in sound knowledge and depth of judgment with the middle and upper classes. If this be true, as indeed seems undeniable from the nature of things, the conclusion is inevitable, that the government of the multitude is, as I have just said, the rule of numbers over intellect. For the higher orders of society are as nothing in the scale, when weighed against the great mass of the labouring population. This I consider to be an unanswerable argument against a system of universal suffrage. If the right cannot be exercised independently, surely it is better not to give it, for in this case, it can favour nothing but riot and corruption ; and if the people do vote honestly, the instructed few are overwhelmed by the ignorant many. This, like every other plan of levelling and extreme equality, may be correctly styled, THE ENTHRONEMENT OF MEDIOCRITY.

But it will be said, aristocracies have a con-

stant tendency to oppress the people. In addition to the interest which they have in good government, in common with the rest of the community, they have also an interest distinct from it, which prompts them to spoil the prostrate Many. Unquestionably this is true. But does, it therefore follow, that the aristocratical element ought to be totally expunged from every good government? If it be proved from the principles of human nature, as well as from direct experience, that in the absence of such an element, no political system can have stability; and if stability be the first, the most indispensable requisite in the constitution of any state, without which there can be no continued progress in wealth or general civilization, and with which there is always hope of advancement; it then necessarily follows, that some portion of aristocracy is always desirable. With equal justice it might be argued against giving power to the democracy, that inconstancy, rashness, and turbulence, are the unavoidable consequences of popular sway. The people, you say, cannot have an interest distinct from itself, it may therefore be deceived as to what is best, but knowingly and designedly it never can rule ill. By increase of knowledge then, the inconveniencies of democra-

tic ascendency may be remedied. Alleviated, I believe they may to a certain extent, but until the principles of human nature be totally changed, they never can be cured. The reasons for this opinion are delivered at some length in an Essay on the Distribution of Wealth. Love of good government is a feeling too vague to attach to any one form in particular, and hence a door is opened for endless change, for how, but by making experiments, can it be ascertained which is the best possible?

The very circumstance on which depends the excellence of purely popular constitutions, namely, that the people can have no private and partial interests to be satisfied by means of the existing government, none distinct from those of the community at large, is the very source of the instability of which I complain. According to the vulgar adage, what is every body's business is nobody's business. In a democracy, there is no body of men whose especial affair, as it were, is to defend the government, for there is none which profits so exclusively by it, as to make it worth its while to be always on the alert, ready to support it whether in the cabinet or in the field.

Thus we see, that instability is not an accidental accompaniment of purely popular consti-

tutions, but is essentially attached to them, since it proceeds from the very same cause which is the source of their peculiar advantages. In like manner, the existence of a set of men, whose interests are *especially* wound up with the actual form of government, by deriving from it more than ordinary benefits, which is the secret of the stability of aristocratical rule, is also the cause of its oppressive tendency. Thus, in the case of pure democratical, as well as of pure aristocratical sway, the good and evil of either political scheme are inseparably linked together; for the same principle which gives rise to the one, is the source of the other also. How then can we expect to cure the radical defects of each, but by a proper admixture of its opposite; just as the skilful grazier by a due crossing of races, is able to produce a new one, superior on the whole to those from which it sprang?

In what has just been said concerning popular governments, I have imagined the majority to be well disposed to existing institutions; and have shewn, even upon this supposition, their probable instability, from the want of a motive in the breasts of any set of men, sufficiently strong to urge them to resist to the utmost the attempts of a factious minority. The common

interest which every man has in good government is not powerful enough for this. Hence the horrible excesses sometimes committed by a very small number of persons. Of this we have lately seen most lamentable instances in the United States of America, where various towns were, during the summer of 1835, the scenes of pillage and incendiarism, perpetrated in general by a mere handful of individuals. Baltimore, in particular, was for days a prey to a paltry mob of this description. Where then was the great mass of peaceful inhabitants, lovers of order? They looked on! Nor was it until a veteran of eighty,* who had fought in the war of independence, raised his old but strenuous voice, that an effectual resistance was at length opposed to the rioters.

But this want of a powerful motive leads in another way also to the instability of popular government. Such is the fickleness of human nature, so great the inconstancy of opinion on all subjects short of demonstration, that nothing

* General Smith. At Boston, a convent of inoffensive Catholics, devoted to the education of children, even Protestant children, was burned to the ground in 1835, without a hand being raised against the work of destruction by the surrounding crowd, or a drop of water brought to quench the devouring element.

but a strong and permanent interest can bind the great mass of mankind, not to uniformity of practice only, but even to steadiness of principle. This I consider a grand truth, deeply seated in our mental constitution. Our opinions depend upon our desires, much more than we are aware of. The latter may act insensibly to ourselves; yet they operate constantly, though slowly. But the mind once set free from the bias of interest, having nothing whereon to hold, is let loose into the boundless ocean of speculation, without star or compass. Under aristocratical governments, the advantage of the ruling few unites them both in principle and practice; but in strictly popular states, where no body of men have a *peculiar* interest in the actual constitution in preference to every other, where is the barrier against incessant change? For, to the argument, the government is good, why alter it? it may always be replied, with great appearance of reason, nothing ought to be considered good which can be made better.

Thus we see again, that the instability of democracies is not accidental, but essential, depending, as it does, on one of the most incontestable principles of human nature—the inconstancy of opinions on all subjects short of de-

monstration, and where a paramount and determinate interest is not concerned.*

In addition to these observations, however universally the elements of education may in time come to be diffused, can we really hope ever to make political philosophers of the great mass of the people, who, during the far greater part of their time, are fully employed in gaining a subsistence? For, independently of the number of hours devoted to labour, bodily toil has a peculiar tendency to unfit for any intellectual

* The deep impression on the minds of certain republican lawgivers of antiquity, concerning the evils of incessant change to which democratic governments are liable, is proved by the desperate remedies they adopted. Thus, Zaleucus, the legislator of Locri, a colony settled in Magna Græcia, enacted, that whoever proposed a new law should come into the assembly of the people with a halter round his neck, and if his motion were rejected, that he should be instantly strangled. It is said that the republic he founded was one of the most orderly that ever existed, having continued with wonderfully little change, for above 200 years. See Gibbon, "Decline and Fall," Chapter 44. To the objection of Atticus against the reality of such a person as Zaleucus, Cicero opposes the authority of Theophrastus, and the traditional testimony of the Locrians themselves. Cicero de Legibus, lib. ii. "Zaleucus," says Gibbon, "whose existence has been rashly attacked, had the merit and glory of converting a band of outlaws into the most virtuous and orderly of the Greek republics." Chapter xliv. Note.

exertion. The man who has worked all day wishes in the evening for nothing but repose and refreshment; and least of all persons, is he likely to puzzle his brain with moral and political disquisitions. Labour of the head, and that of the limbs, are essentially opposed to each other; the former, indeed, may be succeeded by the latter; but rarely, if ever, is the latter, if severe, speedily followed by the former. He who has devoted several hours of the morning to serious study, may, no doubt, afterwards indulge in rapid and continued exercise, though even this is not very common; but where shall we find a shooter or hunter who, after the toils of the field, sits down in the evening to read metaphysics?

The circumstance of the great body of the people being under the necessity of gaining their daily bread, must, then, for ever prevent them from arriving at any high degree of intellectual advancement. But were they to become as enlightened as we would wish to see them, still, this could not cure the radical defect of purely popular governments, instability. For it is not knowledge alone that is wanting, but an intensity of desire or motive, sufficient to put a numerous body always on the defensive, ready to

uphold the constitution of the state against all attacks secret or avowed, prepared to combat alike the eloquence of plausible demagogues, and the swords of daring conspirators.

But should we even suppose the sound majority of the nation to be firm in their opinions, and actuated by motives sufficiently powerful to induce them cordially to rally round the institutions of their country, still after all, remains the difficulty of union, which, in a society democratically constituted, is very great indeed.

The tendency of a system of equality is to isolate individuals, and prevent them from getting acquainted with each other. Thus, the circle of each man's friends and associates becomes extremely limited. Among an aristocracy, on the contrary, every one knows something of his fellow, if not personally, at least by reputation. The habits of insubordination, moreover, the contempt of social distinctions, and the jealousy of all superiority so natural to democracies, are great obstacles to the selection of a head, without which there can be no singleness of design or action. These various causes sufficiently explain how a small but compact minority, ardent in its hopes, steady in its object, and unscrupulous as to means, is so frequently

much more than a match for the vast host of well-meaning, perhaps, but lukewarm and disunited citizens. But the effects of union are so immense, as of themselves almost to demand a separate treatise.

The causes of the permanence of aristocratical governments are then, as it seems, the following: A strong motive to support existing institutions; hence steadiness of views and of conduct: superior knowledge; and facility of union; while, from the absence of all these, arises the radical insecurity of governments founded on the supremacy of the people.

Be it also remarked, that from the first of these causes it follows immediately, that an aristocratic composition of the army is one of the strongest possible safeguards against military despotism. For, where the higher grades are in general filled by persons of fortune or of family, who have a much stronger interest in the permanence of the existing government than they possibly could have in its subversion, no attempts of ambitious leaders can offer any chances of success. All efforts of this kind must, instantly expire before the determined opposition of the great body of officers. But when the various commands are in the hands of those who have

risen from the ranks, and who neither in their own persons, nor in their families, derive any *peculiar* advantage from the actual order of things, then the prospect of a system which shall enrich and ennoble them, as well as gratify that dearest of human wishes, power, may easily prompt them to aid in military usurpation.*

If, then, it appear from what has now been said, that instability is just as necessary an accompaniment of democratical governments, as oppression is of aristocratical, and if the advantages of stability be as great as I have supposed, it would be quite as reasonable to object to all popular influence on the one account, as to all power of an opposite nature on the other. The proper conclusion is, that either is bad alone. By the union of aristocracy and democracy, the oppressive tendency of the former is checked, and the instability of the latter prevented; the steadiness of the one being combined with the energy of the other, change, if desirable, we obtain without revolution, constancy without the dead repose of despotism.

I have already alluded to ancient Athens, France under the Convention, and the United

* See Note B.

States of America, as examples where the advantages and disadvantages of unmixed democratical sway may best be seen. As to the last, it is chiefly the good effects of the system that we as yet witness; the government having not continued long enough for the evils to shew themselves. But already symptoms of these appear. The elections become more turbulent; that of the President, in particular, convulses the Union from one end to the other. Discord begins to spring up between the Northern and Southern States; and one of the latter lately pretended even to set at naught the decrees of Congress.* These are not pleasant indications. This happens, too, in a country most highly favoured by nature, and placed in circumstances quite peculiar, where as yet there is no body of poor, and where land wars are impossible from the want of neighbours. Having already mentioned in another place,† ancient Rome, and modern Britain, as remarkable instances of the excellence of mixed governments, as regards stability, foreign power, and internal prosperity, it is needless again to dwell upon these examples.

* This was written before the more serious disturbances of the summer of 1835.

† See "An Essay on the Distribution of Wealth."

But here an objection presents itself.

In an Essay on the Distribution of Wealth, I have taken notice of a very extraordinary argument brought forward by an able writer against all mixed governments, who goes so far as even to deny the possibility of such an union.* It has been asked—When two rival powers are brought together, how can we prevent the stronger from swallowing up its feebler antagonist? If there be three forces, two will combine to crush the third; and of the two remaining, the one must as infallibly succumb before its more fortunate opponent. I have shewn that the fallacy of this argument lies in supposing that to take place immediately, which, if it happen at all, may not occur till after the lapse of centuries. Now, it can certainly be no just ground of objection to any scheme of human invention, that it is not likely to last for ever. At any rate, if mixed governments be found to be more stable than any of the pure forms, their superiority on that head will be sufficiently established. That the advocates of pure democracy, at all events, should object to mixed governments on the score of instability, nay, of impos-

* See Article "Government." Supplement to Encyclopædia Britannica.

sibility, and that too with such examples as Rome and Great Britain before them, must certainly be considered surprising. The existence of these states, and their prosperity for a great length of time, is a fact if ever there was one. It is equally certain that the governments of both were compounded of two, if not three elements, and that one of them still continues so. In the case of Rome, the Patricians and Plebeians assuredly did not live together at all times on terms of the most perfect amity; they fought and struggled for political power; but with such moderation was the combat conducted, that for 620 years no blood was shed in civil commotions. And when at last terrific dissensions did break out, neither the one party nor the other was able to annihilate its antagonist; but a new power, that of military despotism, established itself on the ruins of both. This may be considered as the natural termination of all republics, where factions run so high as to prevent men from submitting to the laws. Violence on the one side provokes violence on the other, till at last spirits become so exasperated, that each party would rather yield to a common master, than be subject to its opponent. This is quite natural, inasmuch as both reason and passion prompt men

to think any thing better than the supremacy of an old and implacable foe which once was an equal. A new and unprejudiced despotism puts an end to that great evil at any rate.*

So, that one of the two powers which, in a mixed government, divide the state, should swallow up its opponent, is by no means the most probable termination to such a system. Rather than submit to that fate, the weaker party will raise so great a disturbance, that in order to put it down, the stronger will be obliged to place extraordinary powers in the hands of some individual, who will thus be enabled to enslave both. So it happened with the English commonwealth. The Royalists refusing to give in quietly to the victorious Parliament, the latter, in order to pacify the country, was forced to employ an able General, who soon trampled under foot his former masters.

The assertion, that when three powers coexist in any government, two of them will certainly unite to crush the third, is, I think, no less erroneous. If the two which are supposed to combine, be not perfectly equal, it is quite evident that it will be directly against the interest

* See Note C.

of the weaker to aid in such an attempt, which, should it succeed, would leave the latter to support alone the attacks of its more potent ally. This assuredly would be very bad policy. And should the two be nearly on a par, or merely think themselves so, mutual jealousy, and the dread that the other might chiefly reap the fruits of the victory, would effectually prevent either from desiring the death of their common associate. But this must be treated at greater length hereafter, when we come to consider the government of the three powers. Enough, it will probably be thought, has been said here, in answer to the general argument; a more detailed discussion will be given in its proper place. It will there be seen, that the *peculiar* merit of the political Trinity consists in this; that thereby the combat between opposing forces may be greatly moderated, and the duration of government prolonged indefinitely.

But before quitting the present division of our subject, I cannot refrain from dwelling an instant on the inestimable advantages which accrued to the world from the extension of the Roman power. These advantages were indeed so great, as amply to compensate the temporary

evil of the first conquest. The various realms included within its vast dominion, were indebted to Rome, not for the arts and sciences only, and the blessings of a more improved civilization, but chiefly for the most important perhaps of all boons, a long continued peace. Under the tutelary protection of a power not to be disputed, all local quarrels were hushed, all provincial warfare at an end. So much, indeed, was Gibbon struck with this advantage, that he scrupled not to fix upon the period of the five good Emperors, as that in which the known world had enjoyed, upon the whole, the greatest portion of happiness. Be this as it may, if we compare the state of the provinces when under the Roman yoke, with their condition either before or after, we must immediately allow how beneficent was such a sway! Look at the East, torn to pieces by the continual wars of the successors of Alexander; the West, Greece excepted, immersed in the deepest barbarism. And how awful, how hopeless was the scene, when the last act of that drama which had embraced the world, was brought to a close! So numerous were the ills which then afflicted humanity, so deep the cup of misery which it drank, that a poetical imagina-

tion might well have thought that another Pandora, more dreadful even than the first, had consigned her fatal present to the earth.*

* The evidence of this truth is abundantly strewed through the pages of Gibbon. Before the fall of the Roman empire in the West, Northern Africa, for instance, was covered with flourishing towns, civilized and populous; what is it now? This state of prosperity continued more or less, notwithstanding the invasion of the Vandals, down even to the time of Justinian. "When Procopius first landed in Africa, he admired the populousness of the cities and country, strenuously exercised in the labours of commerce and agriculture. In less than twenty years, that busy scene was converted into a silent solitude; the wealthy citizens escaped to Sicily and Constantinople; and the secret historian has confidently affirmed, that five millions of Africans were consumed by the wars and government of the emperor Justinian."—*Decline and Fall*, ch. 43.

Again, a little farther on, in reference to Italy, Gibbon says, "But the power of kings is most effectual to destroy; and the twenty years of the Gothic war had consummated the distress and depopulation of Italy. As early as the fourth campaign, under the discipline of Belisarius himself, fifty thousand labourers died of hunger in the narrow region of Picenum, and a strict interpretation of the evidence of Procopius, would swell the loss of Italy above the sum total of her present inhabitants." And he concludes the chapter thus; "The triple scourge of war, pestilence, and famine, afflicted the subjects of Justinian, and his reign is disgraced by a visible decrease of the human species, which has never been repaired in some of the fairest countries of the globe."

Immense then were the benefits which the nations derived from the supremacy of the Eternal city; and be it well remembered, that this principally arose from the happy constitution of the commonwealth, at once energetic and stable, founded on the union of Aristocracy and Democracy.

Let us now proceed to consider some other forms of civil government.

The very same principles from which we deduced the superiority of a government in which the democratical and aristocratical elements are united, over that in which one alone is found, will serve to shew, in the most satisfactory manner, how greatly preferable it is that power should be divided between a monarch and a body of nobility or rich proprietors, than that either of these should rule with unlimited sovereignty. Where a king and an aristocracy are in presence, each is a check upon the excesses of the other. Neither having any thing to fear from the people, who, by the supposition, are as yet politically of little or no importance, each of these ruling powers is naturally jealous of the other's pre-eminence, which it strives to depress for the sake of raising its own. In this struggle, the people,

as an unconcerned spectator, cares little at first which may gain the ascendancy, and as its predominance is dreaded by neither, each party attempts to strengthen its interests by enlisting the democracy in its cause. But in order to do so, it must conciliate, if not by acts, at least by fair promises, probably by both. Thus the people comes to be courted by both parties in the contest, and it is impossible not to see, that thereby not only its present condition must be ameliorated, but an opening made, whereby in time it will acquire a real political importance.

That such is likely to be the case, the history of our own country, as well as of France, abundantly shews. Magna Charta will always remain a most memorable proof of the advantages derived by the people from the struggles between the aristocracy and the crown. In this case, the democracy gained by its alliance with the former. In stipulating for their own rights, the Barons were obliged to do something also for the mass of the nation. Again, during the wars of the Barons against Henry III., the deputies of boroughs were first called to parliament by Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester. The Revolution of 1688 is another case in point. This was a victory gained over the dynasty of the Stuarts,

chiefly by the aristocracy; but, by the Bill of Rights, the people derived at least an equal advantage from the defeat of the king. Indeed, this will be found to be the general character of the history of the English constitution. It is the result of a series of victories gained over the power of the monarch by the union of the nobility with the people, in which the advantages of the conquest were shared between the triumphant parties.

In France, on the contrary, most of the immunities of the *Tiers Etat*, were obtained, not by its alliance with the aristocracy, but with the crown. The king, feeling himself curbed by the power of his Barons, sought to raise the people as a counterpoise to their authority. Thus Louis *le Gros* is known as the emancipator of the *communes*; and Louis XI., by breaking the ascendancy of the nobles, loosened, no doubt, the chain of feudal tyranny. These different modes in which the people has risen into importance in the two countries, will sufficiently explain why the aristocracy was so long popular in England, while in France it was generally detested; and why reverence for monarchy was so much stronger a feeling in the latter country than in the former.

In an Essay on the Distribution of Wealth, I have dwelt at considerable length upon this subject, and have shewn by general reasoning, enforced by a reference to Russia and Asiatic countries, especially Persia, the immense superiority of a government such as that of the former, in which the Czar, though by law despotic, is in reality checked by a numerous and powerful nobility, as compared with the latter, where the authority of the Shah is truly unlimited by any body of men whatsoever. I have there also remarked, that a principal source of this superiority, is the stability in the order of succession, which it is the paramount interest of an aristocracy to maintain.* The perpetual wars which have arisen in Persia and other eastern countries from disputes for the throne, have been one of the most dreadful of the evils to which that fine region has been always exposed. Their effects, both immediate and remote, have been alike disastrous. So long as the combat raged, every class of the inhabitants must have suffered in their persons, property, and feelings of security; and when the contest ceased by the destruction

* "C'est un avantage immense qu'une dynastie antique sur un trône incontesté."—*Benjamin Constant.*

of one of the parties, the more prominent of the surviving individuals or families were sure to fall victims to the jealousy of the conqueror. For instability in the order of succession is not only a constant source of civil war, but is one of the principal causes of tyranny. When a monarch once feels himself secure, a main incentive to cruelty and oppression is at an end. Desire of self-preservation, and its correlative, fear of destruction, are the most universal passions of human nature. When a man has made up his mind that the existence of certain individuals is inconsistent with his own safety, every precaution, to whatever enormities it may lead, seems in his own eyes justified, or at least excused, by a regard to that first principle of action, without which all life would soon be extinct. Fear, on the other hand, fails not to magnify the danger, and makes a giant of every bugbear. The excessive uneasiness connected with fear, is the cause of the desperate means employed to get rid of it. Other passions, such as the malevolent ones, Hatred and its modifications, Envy, Jealousy, Revenge, rankle in the breast, and are the source of much mental distress; but this is no more to be compared to the pain of terror, than the gnawing of a decayed tooth to the excruciat-

ing anguish of the *tic douloureux*. Besides, the former set of emotions have at least some pleasure connected with them; for, though probably greatly outweighed by the pain, malevolence has its gratifications as well as benevolence; Terror alone, of all passions, seems inseparably connected with misery. Others, while they torment, excite at all events; this, on the contrary, always depresses. "There is nothing I dread so much as fear," says Montaigne rather quaintly, but justly. Fear is the greatest of tyrants, and where the power is given, no excesses will be thought too great to drive away such an evil; since, as Locke has observed, pain affords a stronger motive to action than pleasure; and that in question is one of the most acute which can afflict humanity.

Hence monarchs the least secure, have generally been the most sanguinary. Undoubtedly, there are other sources of tyranny, such as avarice, revenge,* temporary bursts of passion, or mere whim and caprice; the first of which, especially, is formidable from its permanence.

* The horrible proscription of Scylla is attributed by historians, principally, if not solely, to revenge. It was his boast, that no one had ever done so much good to his friends, or evil to his enemies.

But regard to self-preservation is a more universal, fully as constant, and, where danger is apprehended, a far more powerful passion. By lulling to sleep this wakeful sentiment, we may hope therefore to cut off the principal source of tyrannical sway. But so long as the order of succession to the throne remains unfixed, or at least liable to be subverted by the first fortunate general or conspirator, so long must the demon of fear possess the breast of the despot, and urge him to level with the dust all superiority of rank, fortune, or talent. This, then, is the prodigious advantage of an Aristocracy; in that state of society at all events, where the people as a political power goes for nothing. For such a body has both the force and the will to maintain the order of succession inviolate, and prevent those contests for supremacy so fatal to all classes, but to the upper ranks especially. For, though during the contest, the aristocracy should suffer no more than those beneath them, yet, on the close, they are sure to fare the worst from the jealous dread of the victor. Let what is now taking place in Poland vouch for the truth of this.

This circumstance alone, the instability of Asiatic governments, would be sufficient to account for the deplorable condition of some of the

fairest regions of the earth, the utter want of improvement which has so long been the reproach of the East, and the horrid tyranny to which it has been always a prey. This instability, we find, may in a great measure be traced to the absence of an aristocracy, which is both a cause and effect of those frequent changes. For, from the want or weakness of such a body, perpetual contests for dominion arise; while in these contests, and under the tyranny that succeeds to them, any previously existing rudiments of a class of this description are sure to be effaced.

There can be little doubt that the cruelties of the Cæsars, of Tiberius in particular, were in great part owing to the cause above stated, the insecure tenure by which they held the imperial crown. Augustus, however, felt himself firm in his place, from the subjugation and death of all his competitors, as well as from the general lassitude and wish for repose, so natural after a long succession of civil commotions. This may help to explain the change of character manifested by that prince after his elevation to the head of the empire.

As a further proof of the principle above stated, that the greatest source of tyranny is Fear, I may observe that this may be shewn, not from

the conduct of individuals only at different periods and in various countries, but from the facts of the multitude also, in revolutionary times. Thus many of the most atrocious deeds of the populace during the great French Revolution, were committed under the impulse of fear. I may instance the barbarous murders of Foulon and Berthier, at the first opening of that grand event, which were perpetrated under the influence of terror arising from a report spread among the people, that the king had surrounded Paris with numerous bodies of troops, and was about to let them loose upon the capital. But the most notorious example is that of the dreadful days of September 1792. The leaders of the movement, Danton especially, who wished, in the terrific language of this gigantic demagogue, to frighten the Royalists,* knew well that to stimulate the rage of the mob, it was necessary to awaken their fears. They, therefore, gave out that Verdun had surrendered to the Prussians, who might soon be expected at the gates of Paris. The alarm caused by this announcement gave birth to the fury which vented itself in the massacres of the prisons.

* "Il faut faire peur aux Royalistes."

The advantage of an aristocracy, in those monarchical states at least where the people is politically of no importance, is then two-fold. First, it acts as a check upon the prince; secondly, though it thus renders him less despotic, yet within *certain limits* it supports his power, and gives stability to the order of succession. Its conduct in the first instance depends upon that principle common to human nature which prompts every individual, at least every body of individuals, to increase its power at the expense of others; in the latter, it is also moved by another modification of interest, regard to self-preservation. For, as we have seen, though all classes are afflicted in those contests which upset and build up thrones, the aristocracy is still the principal sufferer.

Previous, however, to the period when the people begin to take a prominent part in politics, monarchs, I believe, are little inclined to feel or acknowledge the debt of gratitude due by them to the nobility. They regard them much more in the light of enemies who wish to control their prerogative, than of friends who have an interest in supporting the throne. From the contests between these rival powers, arises, as we have above seen, a third advantage belonging to the

union of aristocracy with monarchy, the alleviation of the present condition of the people courted by one or other of the opposite parties, and an opening thus afforded to the future rise of the democracy. So that, whatever opinion may be entertained as to the expediency of an aristocratical body in a more advanced period of society, its utility in a ruder age seems to be incontestable.

When, however, in course of time, the people has become a real power in the state, the conflicting parties will no longer be the same. Both the king and the aristocracy begin to be alarmed at the advances made by the democracy, and now find it more for their interest to combine against the common enemy, and bury their former quarrels in oblivion. So long as the two former are united together, as well as the nobility and rich proprietors among themselves, so long the fortress of their strength remains secure. The great danger to be feared by them, is division in their counsels. And this almost unavoidably springs up among the members of the aristocracy, wherever popular opinion is much considered. Some of the more generous spirits of that body, moved by their native warmth of character and love of justice, others by desire of popularity or of power,

set up as the advocates of the people, and thus sow dissension in their own order. No doubt, these will form at first but a small minority of the whole. The people, however, having thus opened a breach in the defences of the great, will not be tardy of pressing forward into the body of the citadel.

The history of Great Britain since the Revolution of 1688, and especially since the peace of 1815, is nothing but a long illustration of the truth of these principles. That portion of the aristocracy which, partly from generous motives, partly from a love of popularity, and partly from a desire of entering into power, became the assertors of the people's rights, were long known by the name of Whigs, while the great majority who retained the true spirit of their order, were designated by the appellation of Tories.

The events which have taken place in England within these last five years in particular, form a most striking example of the truth of the above remarks. The Reform in Parliament, with all the consequences that have already flowed, and which may fairly be expected still to follow from that very remarkable occurrence, is due to the momentary union of the crown with a minority of the aristocracy, assisted by all the influ-

ence which the democracy could enlist in their support.* I say a minority of the aristocracy; for there can be no doubt that the great majority of that body were decidedly opposed to these concessions, and that nothing but dread of revolution, or of an immense creation of Peers, which would have neutralized the resistance and diminished the dignity of the existing house of Lords, could have induced them so greatly to lessen their own power, and increase that of the people. There can even be little question, that the victorious minority went a great deal farther than they themselves intended a short time before, stimulated partly by the example of a successful revolution in a neighbouring country, which naturally tended to increase the ardour of all Reformers, whether born in the ranks of the aristocracy or of the people; partly urged on to more decisive measures by the fruitlessness of the at-

* The only thing that seems at all contrary to general principle in this union, and therefore hard to explain, is the conduct of the king; but we must remember that reasonings almost invariably true in reference to bodies of men, admit of many more exceptions when applied to individuals. Hence, to determine the motives of an assembly is easy—of any one person in particular, often very difficult. Accordingly, though the king favoured Reform, the queen and court were against it.

tempts they had long been making to obtain even the most moderate changes in the representative system. The ill success of these endeavours proved to such of the Whigs as were really desirous of reform for its own sake, as well as to those who were advocates of this measure chiefly as a stepping-stone to power, that the only chance they had of either of these objects being attained, lay in bringing forward a measure of so sweeping a nature as to rally to their standard the great body of the people. It was, as had been proved, vain to suppose that the nation could be greatly stimulated by the hopes of disfranchising one or two rotten boroughs, or giving members to a very few large towns. Something more deep and general was necessary to rouse the dormant spirit of democracy. The Whigs being a minority of the aristocracy, could not, even if assisted by the crown, maintain themselves against the majority of that powerful body. Nothing but a measure which might be supposed greatly to interest and excite the middle classes of society could procure them the victory over their opponents.

The consequence was the bringing in of the Reform Bill, which, on its first proposal, was received by the majority of the House of Commons with such surprise, as to give rise to bursts

of laughter. But this grand measure was carried through, if not without a hard struggle, at least without any violence whatsoever, a most astonishing proof of the stability of mixed governments, and their susceptibility of improvement without revolution.

One other combination of two of the simple forms of government, remains yet to be considered. I have examined the union of aristocracy with democracy, and come to the conclusion, that the mixture of these two powers is preferable to either of them alone; except it be in the case of some states placed in very peculiar circumstances. It has also been shewn, I think, very clearly, that the combination of monarchy with aristocracy is far superior to the undivided sovereignty of the one or the other. It now remains to be seen what are the merits of that system in which monarchy is found conjoined with democracy.

This is a species of government of which, till of late, the world has scarcely seen an example, so that we have very little experience whereby to try the correctness of the arguments that may be urged for or against. Let us see what these arguments are.

It may be observed, in the first place, that the same general reasonings which were formerly used to shew the superiority of mixed governments over simple ones, apply to this case as to the two preceding. This in particular, it may be thought by many, is an admirable expedient for obtaining the unquestionable advantages of popular rule without its inconveniences. A monarch, it may be supposed, is a much better check to the turbulence and inconstancy of democratic counsels than an aristocracy; and if the people alone really cannot govern themselves in peace, that it is better to have but one privileged individual in the state than a great number. Thus the cause of Order and of Liberty may be united, with the least possible departure from the principles of equality. The constitution may be so fixed that the people shall have quite sufficient power effectually to resist any despotic attempts of the king, and the latter still have enough influence to restrain the excesses of the former.

Plausible as these arguments are, I cannot but think that this form of government presents very doubtful chances of stability and success. We suppose a country in which all aristocratical influence is annulled, and the powers of the state

are shared between a monarch and a purely popular assembly. What must at first strike us as unfavourable to this combination, is the very great contrast presented by the two ruling authorities. On the one hand is a great equality not merely of rights, but also of fortunes and conditions, since by the supposition aristocracy is at a very low ebb; on the other, is a prodigious privilege and enormous wealth; for if royalty be not hereditary and richly provided for, it can serve no purpose as a check to popular turbulence. Now this contrast must appear very shocking in the eyes of a democratic community. Fond of equality as it naturally is, and averse to all aristocratical distinctions, how can a position so lofty, so anomalous, and, above all, so costly to the nation, escape from that levelling jealousy? All other privileges of rank, all ascendancy of the great being done away with, the throne alone remains perched, as it were, on an eminence, the more easily to be shot at. If men in their conduct are often various and contradictory, they nevertheless are desirous of some degree of order and consistency in their principles. Supposing them to be intimately persuaded that equality is a good thing, privileges detestable, economical government one of the first of blessings, it becomes

not a little difficult to convince them, that, at the same time, an hereditary chief magistracy is the best possible, and a great civil list essential to the prosperity of the country. Philosophers indeed may prove by very satisfactory arguments that the regal power is necessary, in that state at least, to prevent general confusion and anarchy; but these reasonings reach not the vulgar. If equality and popular rule be good, whatever is opposed to these, is, in their eyes, bad. All other artificial superiorities have been got rid of; why then reserve this last, the greatest of all? Down then with the throne, the only obstacle to a really popular and economical government.

Arguments of this sort are so plausible, and above all, so accordant with the common habits of thinking among a people jealous of aristocratic distinctions and attached to equality, that they cannot fail to find very general assent. When urged by able writers and popular orators, their effects may be irresistible.

Let us now see what are likely to be the relations between a king and a popular assembly freely elected. Every assembly of this sort, consisting of a pretty considerable number of individuals, is actuated by two strong tendencies, the one prompting it to consult the interests and

wishes of its constituents, on whom it is dependent; the other impelling it to enlarge the sphere of its own influence. Now, if the people be sufficiently jealous of the royal prerogative, as appears probable from what has been above observed, there can be no doubt that their representatives will be fully as much, if not more opposed to it, supposing corruption out of the question. For, in addition to the general feeling of hostility to royalty, which may be imagined to pervade them as well as the rest of the community, they are moreover actuated by the desire of pleasing their constituents, as well as by the wish of extending the political power of their own body. Stimulated by these motives, the majority will pass such laws as, when presented to the monarch for his sanction, cannot but throw him into a most unpleasant dilemma. If he yield to the suggestions of the representatives of the people, he must consent to measures which will undermine the structure of his power, and thus commit a political suicide. If he withhold his approval, the consequences are not less to be dreaded. The spectacle of a single individual rejecting acts deliberately voted by a popular assembly, and which consequently are supposed to be approved by the great mass of the

nation, is one which cannot but shock exceedingly all classes of men, and pave the way for a more strenuous and determined hostility to the executive government. So that whichever course be adopted, it is impossible that the throne can long resist the attacks made against it. Nor is it necessary to suppose in the people or its representatives, any predetermined plan for the subversion of royalty. Many, very many will advocate measures really destructive of monarchy, without being the least aware of what they are doing. The tendency which every political power has to extend itself at the expense of its opponents, urges on the people and its representatives, by a secret but incessant impulse, to sweep away all barriers to their dominion. When the evil is done, then indeed the eyes of moderate, though not very clear-sighted men, are opened; but it is too late. Whenever two powers co-exist in any government, there cannot fail to be a struggle; but as has been before shown, the contest between an aristocracy and democracy may be prolonged for a great length of time, without terminating in violence, as happened in ancient Rome. But it seems very doubtful, whether the differences of a monarch, unsupported by an aristocracy, with a people

jealous of its rights, admit of this temperate and constitutional warfare. The difference between them is too great, not to make it immediately apparent that they are natural enemies; whereas an aristocracy does not thus stand out in relief, but descends by insensible degrees till it mingles with the mass of the people. At least this is the case with such aristocracies as are not of a feudal nature. It is not easy to say in all instances, whether certain individuals belong to this class or not; the line between it and the multitude is shaded off so as not to be distinctly visible. It was long, very long before the people of England began to be jealous of the power of the great proprietors, and to consider them as their political enemies. Restrain the prerogative of the crown, was the cry of all patriots as well as demagogues. This is very natural; the influence of the one being so much more apparent, so much more incontestable, than that of the other. Besides this, there is another circumstance which greatly tends to soften the contest between the people and an open aristocracy, such as that of England; which is, that every man should he become rich, may hope himself to be enrolled in the latter. Give the most furious demagogue an estate of L.10,000 a-year, and

his popular ardour will, I fear, be sadly damped. Thus, nothing is so common as to see those of plebeian descent, who by industry have made their own fortune, turn round and deny their origin, and become more overbearing than the heir of "all the Howards." This is sufficiently natural, though it must be allowed, no less revolting. In the anxiety of such persons to shew that they belong to the aristocracy, nothing but titles and distinctions will go down with them. They adopt the opinions of that class, not merely from conviction, and a regard to their power and pecuniary interest, but in order to prove, if possible, that they never belonged to the democracy, or at least have bid adieu to it for ever. It is this hope of rising to the honours of the great, which gives a nobility and gentry, such as that of Great Britain, where competition is not excluded, so great an influence over the opinions of the people, especially of the middle ranks, disarms many resentments, and hence consolidates their power. But the number of persons who may reasonably expect to bask in the sunshine of royal favour, and to derive from thence a reflected glory, is of course comparatively very limited.

It is needless to dwell on the advantage pos-

sessed by a numerous chamber of nobles in its contests with the people, as compared with a monarch placed in the same circumstances. The fact of one man putting himself in opposition to the general will, appears monstrous; but where it is resisted by a large body of individuals, distinguished by birth, wealth, hereditary renown, and many of them the most instructed men in the country, the case is very different. The people are much more inclined to believe that private interest is not the sole motive of such conduct, than when a king alone sets himself against their wishes. Hence they are more ready to moderate their demands, and not push matters to an extremity.

Thus far we have argued on the supposition of a people exercising freely their elective rights, and returning an assembly of representatives chosen by the unbiassed suffrages of their constituents. In this case, the union of monarchy with democracy does not, it appears, promise to be very long-lived, owing to the encroachments of the latter on the former. This, then, is one rock, on which the species of government we are now considering, may very probably split. If, in order to avoid this danger, we give great power to the executive, one of an opposite nature arises on the part of the crown, which, should it gain

the ascendancy, may completely keep down its rival, and overthrow all the safeguards of public liberty.

There are two ways in which a king may endeavour to vanquish democratic resistance; Influence, and Force. If the sovereign be like the present monarch of France, the dispenser of a vast civil list, and the head of a prodigious hierarchy of functionaries, civil and military, of which the ramifications extend to every part of the country, and through all ranks of society, there can be no question that his power of swaying the popular elections must be very considerable. Great, however, as it unquestionably will be, there seems sufficient reason to doubt, whether it ever can become equal to that steady, constant, never-failing influence, exercised by an ancient and rich aristocracy over the choice of the people. As has been already observed, much of the power of such a body is owing to its dominion being in a great measure unseen and unsuspected; whereas, every one is apt to dread the interference of the crown. The one is an open foe, the other a concealed one. At the time of elections, the members of the aristocracy can mingle on the most familiar terms with even the lowest of the people; and the son of a peer

may often be seen giving the right hand of fellowship to a shoemaker or blacksmith. Thus they try to persuade the multitude that they are a part of themselves, and not a distinct corps in the state, with interests different from those of the community at large. But for a king thus to bear himself, without a total loss of dignity, even were he blessed with ubiquity, is manifestly impossible; and a deputy can never produce the same effect as the principal.

Besides this consideration, we must observe, that the great mass of public functionaries in a monarchy such as that of France, is less interested than we might suppose, in the permanence of this or that ministry, or even in the duration of the existing dynasty. Undoubtedly the prefects, and all the higher authorities removeable at pleasure, have a most decided motive for supporting the present order of things; but not so those of an inferior grade, who still will be "vicars of Bray, whatever king may reign." Be the changes which take place in the higher regions what they may, these affect not the condition of the vast host of subaltern administrators, who, whether Bonaparte, Bourbon, or Orleans, sway the rod of empire, continue, undisturbed in their insignificance, to sign passports, and draw up *Procès*

Verbaux. In France, it has never been the practice to make a general turn out of the members of the *Administration*, as it is called, on occasion of any of the great changes which so frequently have taken place in that country. The heads, who form but a very small part of the whole, are alone dismissed. We cannot therefore suppose, that the mass of public functionaries feel exceedingly anxious to uphold the government of the day, or that they will stir heaven and earth to get the candidates of the ministry returned as members of the legislative assembly. Such of them, no doubt, as are electors, will be obliged to vote in favour of these candidates, or else run the chance of losing their place. But dismissals on this account will probably be less numerous than we might expect, by reason of the odium which a government fails not to incur which adopts such means of maintaining its power. Of all the acts of the Villéle ministry in France, none brought down upon it such general detestation, as its attempts thus to enslave the consciences of the servants of the public.

The influence of the crown over the representatives of the nation is perhaps more to be apprehended. In a monarchy, such as France,

where the number of posts at the disposal of the king is infinite, it is impossible that a Chamber of Deputies, especially if elected for a term of years, can escape the contagion of court favour. It appears by an account recently printed in one of the French papers, that a very considerable majority of the members of the lower house, hold some place or other of profit under the crown.*

In this way, no doubt, the government may be carried on for some length of time, until the people, thoroughly disgusted by the servility of its delegates, makes a violent effort at the general election, and sends a new set of men to advocate its interests. It was thus that all the experience, all the craft of Villéle, assisted by the whole weight of ministerial influence, were unable to prevent his total discomfiture by the heroic exertions of the French nation in 1827. The spirit of democracy may be repressed for a period, but on the first favourable opportunity, it bursts out with more energy than ever. Nothing can keep it under except military despotism, or aristocratical influence. It

* Out of 460, 300 enjoy lucrative posts at the disposal of the Crown. (1835.)

remains therefore to be seen, what chances a monarch, placed in the circumstances we have supposed, may have of governing by violence.

In some respects, a society democratically contituted seems particularly exposed to attacks of this description. If aristocracies are themselves often oppressive towards the people, they at least help to protect it from the unlimited power of One. They are well aware, that they must be the first to suffer from an exorbitant extension of the kingly authority, and in defending themselves, they must shield the community at large. The absence of such a body, therefore, favours exceedingly the designs of despotism. Where a general equality prevails, the people, in its contests with the crown, finds itself destitute of leaders on whom it may rely. Without some such bond of union as is afforded by those social superiorities to which the mass has been accustomed to look for advice and protection in ordinary circumstances, it is not easy for them to rally and combine on any emergency, in opposition to tyrannical inroads. They are like sheep scattered without a shepherd. But having before touched upon this subject, it is the less necessary to dwell upon it now. The difficulty of union then, is one of the greatest evils resulting

from a general equality of fortunes, which alike paralyses the sound portion of the community in their resistance to despotic sway on the one hand, and to popular licentiousness on the other. The crown, on the contrary, has all the advantage that can be derived from singleness of purpose, and steadiness in the pursuit, and has at its orders the whole military force of the nation. Nothing but a most decided spirit of liberty on the part of the people can withstand so favourable a position. The temper of the army is above all things to be considered. In a society such as we now suppose, there can be no doubt that a portion at least, of that democratic tendency which pervades the whole body politic, must be shared by the mass of the soldiery. Besides, the constitution of the army would be modelled on the same system of equality which reigns in other branches of the public service. No privileged corps of troops would be allowed, ready, without demur, on every occasion, to fight for that royalty, the source of all its peculiar emoluments, of all its distinctions. Moreover, the condition of officers would be regulated by laws securing them against the caprices of power, and advancement would depend on seniority or merit, not on interest. The continual influx

of new levies, and the return of the old troops into the ranks of citizens, would especially tend to keep up a community of feeling between the military and the rest of the people. It cannot therefore be imagined, that an army thus constituted would be very ready to follow implicitly the orders of the monarch, even to the destruction of the public liberties.

Thus, at least, it would be in time of peace. In war, indeed, if the king were the commander of his own troops, and led them on to victory, the case might be very different, for then the spirit of the citizen becomes sunk in that of the soldier, whose fortunate captain is the god of his idolatry. But this supposes the monarch to be his own general, and a successful one, which in an hereditary prince is not likely often to happen. Besides, there might be an express constitutional enactment against his commanding the army in person. Therefore, this supposition may very fairly be put out of the question. Upon the whole, then, it does not appear that a constitutional sovereign ruling over a democratic community, is likely to find his ambitious designs against the liberties of the nation, blindly supported by the military force however numerous.

The events which have taken place in a neigh-

bouring country within these few years, form a very striking example of the truth of these remarks. The moment chosen by Charles X. for his attempt to overthrow by violence the constitution to which he had sworn, was one of the most favourable that can be imagined. A brilliant and successful enterprise had just excited the admiration, and gratified the tastes of a military people, and part of the glory of such an achievement could not but play round the royal head. But notwithstanding an event so calculated to give lustre and power to the crown, no part of the army could be induced to support the tyrannical attempts made against the national rights, except the guards, a privileged corps. The soldiers of the line, if they did not assist the efforts of the people, took no part against them, remaining impassive spectators of the combat. The revolution which changed the dynasty, also swept away the royal general, so that even that prop of regal power has now fallen to the ground.

Thus we see, that in a society, and under a form of government such as we are now considering, the means possessed by the monarch of crushing by force the energies of a rival democracy, and establishing a permanent military

despotism, are less than might at first be supposed. It has been shewn also, that the sources of influence at his command, powerful though they may be, are not likely to be alone sufficient to maintain that degree of general accordance between the legislature and the executive, which is necessary to the regular advance of the political machine.

But though these efforts of open or secret hostility may not be ultimately or long successful, yet it would be rash to conclude that they might not triumph for a time. The more, however, the people were kept down for a period, the greater the fury with which they would arise on the first favourable opportunity. Thus the car of government will be liable to sudden shocks and violent movements in opposite directions alternately, without ever acquiring, for any length of time, that steady uninterrupted march, which can alone secure the welfare of those who are borne along with it. Society will be perpetually exposed to the two opposite evils of despotism and anarchy; and skilful will be the pilot who can direct the vessel of the state between these the eternal Scylla and Charybdis of political institutions.

As before observed, the world has had little

experience of a state of things such as here supposed,—the union of monarchy with a democratical condition of society and an effectual control of the people over public affairs. To the history of France alone since its first and great Revolution, must we turn for positive lessons of this nature. And it will, I think, be pretty generally granted, that the experiment there made amply corroborates the soundness of the preceding reasonings. Not to dwell on the very rapid overthrow of the constitutional throne of 1791, the series of convulsions which followed, and the despotism in which they terminated, since, as may fairly be said, the violent factions engendered by the revolutionary changes, must have proved speedily fatal to any government whatsoever except that founded on the sword; let us examine the series of events which followed the restoration of the Bourbons. The history of the first twelve or thirteen years presents one continued succession of attempts on the part of the crown against the press and the representative system. In consequence of these efforts, the electoral law as fixed in accordance with the charter received an essential modification, and, through ministerial intrigue, a Chamber was returned ready to go all lengths in furthering the

designs of power. But after this assembly had ruled France for some years, so great was the hatred excited by its consummate corruption, that on occasion of the general election of 1827, nothing could keep down the energies of an indignant people. A new Chamber was returned animated by more patriotic sentiments, before whom an obnoxious administration was obliged to retire. Hitherto the tide had flowed in favour of the royal prerogative, henceforward it was destined to set in a contrary direction. It cannot be disputed that the over-pertinacity of the Chamber of Deputies in 1829 helped to drive the king to those desperate measures which in the following year led to his dethronement. Between him and a really free representative body there was an incompatibility so great, that sooner or later one must have fallen. If he could no longer rule by influence, the sword alone could decide the combat.

Nor is the history of the new dynasty, brief though it be, more assuring than that of the old. By the Revolution of July, the people gained an immense increase of power, which the factious failed not soon to abuse. Not a year has passed since that event without riots, insurrections, or

conspiracies; Paris has twice seen the banners of civil war unfurled within its walls, and its pavement dyed with the blood of citizens; the second city in the kingdom was for eight days together a scene of carnage and frightful destruction; and the life of the monarch, after having been more than once in danger, has of late very narrowly escaped an attempt perhaps more diabolical than ever before disgraced the annals of the human race.* These are facts not very promising as to the final success of that form of government compounded of democracy and monarchy. It is essential also to remark, that, with the exception of the troubles in La Vendée, all the disturbances above alluded to were raised by the Republicans, not by the friends of the exiled family.

Certainly, if any institution were capable of giving stability to such a system, it is that of a National Guard such as now exists in France, by which the mass of the people, especially of the higher and middle ranks, are enrolled in defence of the existing state of things under officers chosen by themselves. It becomes, then, very essential to investigate what may be the real se-

* Since this was written, another attempt against the king's life has been made by a political fanatic, Alibeau.

curities afforded by this expedient against popular licence on the one hand, and regal tyranny on the other.

The objects to be attained by a National Guard, are thus, it appears, two-fold. The first and most ostensible purpose is the defence of social order from all the elements of discord, which seldom fail to be pretty thickly sown in all democratic communities. Let us see what may fairly be expected from it on this head. We have found that difficulty of union is one of the chief causes, which, in a state of society where equality greatly prevails, often prevent the sound portion of the community from effectually resisting tumultuary movements. On this account, even a small minority active and consistent, may frequently give the law to a majority incapable of combination. Now a National Guard is admirably calculated for remedying this inconvenience. By means of it, in every district of the country, small as well as great, a centre of union is constituted, where, on the first occasion, all well-meaning citizens may fly with arms in their hands, arrange themselves in their accustomed companies under the guidance of officers on whom they rely, and be prepared at a moment's warning to march against the enemies of the pub-

lic tranquillity. The advantages, then, of this institution in giving a facility for combination are unquestionable. It remains to be seen how far the *will* may be supposed to go along with the *power*.

As I have before observed, in treating of the political consequences of the prerogative of primogeniture, and also in a former part of this disquisition, one of the principal causes of the instability of democratic governments consists in the remissness of the great mass of the community. Where no aristocratical distinctions, no privileged bodies exist, no class of men has a *peculiar* interest in the preservation of the actual order of things. Most men, indeed, at least those possessed of some property, have a common desire for good and stable rule; and are averse to violence and tumults. Still, it by no means follows, that the interest they feel in existing institutions is sufficient to induce them to be ever ready to expose their persons in defending the laws against the factious. Many a one may wish well to the present government who would hesitate before descending into the street with a musket on his shoulder, to be shot at from holes and corners. And when to his own irresolution, are added the intreaties of his wife and children, it

will be no easy matter for Duty, stern Duty, to make herself obeyed. This is on the supposition of his having no fellow-feeling with the disaffected. But, as has likewise been before remarked in the same place, where the interests of men, or their affections founded on custom and old associations, do not bind them down to certain views and to some definite line of conduct, there is no end to inconstancy. This it is wh ch explains the proverbial fickleness of popular counsels. Where no one gains any thing from the institutions under which he lives, except that general order and security from oppression by which all are benefited, but which, it is ever difficult to prove, may not be better obtained by some change; and where all veneration for kings, priests, and nobles is done away with, it is no easy task to hit upon a system, which shall fix the wavering and conciliate universal consent.* But whatever remissness and inconstancy belong to the people in their character of rulers, are shared also by the National Guard, which is itself nothing but the same people trained to military exercises. There are no influences to which the one is exposed, to which the other is not equally open; no languor,

* See Note D.

indifference, or changes of opinion, manifest themselves in the former, without being felt by the latter. It is not easy, therefore, to see how a National Guard can be a very effectual control upon the excesses of the democratical spirit, which as much pervades that body as the community at large.

The history of France during the last forty years, affords many proofs of the truth of these remarks. Was there no National Guard during the first Revolution, to check the fury of the populace? On the contrary, we read that 100,000 men enrolled themselves in Paris alone. An army of citizens sprang like enchantment into life, under the command of the truest of patriots, the incomparable Lafayette. Where was this force when the Tuilleries were stormed on the 10th of August?—where at the massacres of September?—where at the proscription of the unfortunate Gironde? Which of all the numerous insurrections of that eventful period was quelled by the firmness of the citizen soldiers? To these questions we in vain look for an answer.* Nothing can more clearly prove

* One insurrection only do I remember to have been put down by the National Guard, which was in July 1791, on the anniversary of the Federation. But it was then led by

the impotency of this force in times of trouble, that is, when most wanted. There can be no doubt, that the majority of that body were either over-awed, indifferent, or else friendly to the insurgents. The rulers of the factions, on the other hand, failed not to make changes in the superior officers favourable to their views, and thus completely paralysed the efforts of those who might have been willing to resist.

In fairness it must be allowed, that since the revolution of July 1830, the National Guard of Paris has nobly done its duty, in the performance of which it has submitted to great privations, and incurred many dangers. Assisted by the regular army, it has put down two insurrections, not without loss of life on its own part, and has certainly prevented many more. But the same praises cannot be given to the conduct of a like force in other towns of the kingdom in which troubles have broken out. Grenoble and Lyons, the latter especially, were the scenes of tumultuary proceedings, and open rebellion, in which the National Guards were found

a man, to whom, for firmness and integrity, the history of the world affords few parallels. The first shot, however, directed against the rioters by the orders of Lafayette, proved the death-warrant of his popularity and of his influence.

totally inefficient. They have in consequence been disbanded in both these towns, for indifference and remissness at least, if not connivance with the insurgents. To the military alone was Lyons indebted for its pacification.*

It yet remains to be seen, what advantages may be expected from a National Guard, considered as a bulwark against the inroads of despotism. The same difficulty of union, which, in a society democratically constituted, often exposes the sound majority of a nation to be governed by a turbulent but enterprising and combined minority, in like manner lays them open to the tyranny of one. As a remedy to this evil, it is not easy to imagine an institution more valuable than that we are now considering, which, while it trains the people to the use of arms, en-

* During the horrible massacres in the prisons of the Citadel of Barcelona, in the beginning of January 1836, the National Guard remained impassive spectators of the popular fury. They were afterwards complimented by General Alvarez, on having so well maintained public order! Some of them even took part with the insurrection of the following day in favour of the Constitution of 1812, and were in consequence sent out of the town by Mina on his return. In July of the same year, a popular movement at Malaga, and in other towns, was begun by the National Guard.

ables all well-meaning citizens to unite their efforts against the ambitious designs of party leaders under republican governments, or of kings in constitutional monarchies. It may be laid down as an axiom, that nothing is more essential to the existence of democratical states, than that the great body of the people be accustomed to bear arms, in order to defend their liberties against the various enemies who fail not to threaten them from different quarters. This is a truth well known to the inhabitants of Switzerland, in which country, every individual on arriving at the age of manhood, is obliged to learn military exercises.*

Under republics, where standing armies are so much to be dreaded, and therefore not admissible, this warlike education of the community is necessary, as a protection both against foreign foes, and internal danger. In monarchies of any description, even that we are now considering, where a king and a democracy are in presence, a regular military force may indeed with greater safety be maintained than under republics. In truth, they never could exist at all without it, in the absence of an aristocracy powerful enough effectually to support the throne. For, as has

* See Note E.

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been already proved, a National Guard is of itself by no means a prop of royalty which can with any safety be relied on. A standing army is therefore essentially necessary to a monarch placed in such a position; it is the very condition of his existence. Without a force of this kind, the rebellion of Lyons in 1834 would certainly have proved successful; and it is doubtful how far even the insurrection in Paris in June 1832 could have been got under without the assistance of the troops of the line. So we may very fairly say, that but for the army, the throne of 1830 would ere this have been dashed to the ground.

But if, in a democratical monarchy, a standing army be not only admissible, but even absolutely indispensable, where, it may be asked by some, is the occasion for a militia? Against foreign invasion it is evidently not required; and the enemies of internal tranquillity, may, it will be said, be left to be dealt with by the regular troops, who are at all times more to be depended on. If the king, however, have need of a large military force in order to guard his prerogative, it is on that account the more necessary for the people to have some means of protecting themselves against so great a power, in the case of its being wielded for the purposes

of oppression, rather than of public safety. Now, no expedient can be well imagined more calculated for this end, than that the bulk of the male population should be trained to the use of arms, under officers named by themselves. A National Guard, therefore, in a political state such as we are now considering, is quite as essential to the defence of liberty, as a standing army to the maintenance of the royal authority.

It is, then, fully as much in the character of defender of the rights of the people against the power of the crown, as in that of protector of public order against the factious, that the institution of a National Guard is of vital importance in the state of society now under review. Indeed, though it is chiefly in the latter capacity that we have hitherto been taught to regard it, yet I cannot but consider it of more value in the former. Since there must be a standing army, there is no reason why it should not be entrusted with the preservation of the public peace. At most, the National Guard is but an auxiliary, and one, as we have seen, by no means always to be depended on. But, in its character of defender of the national liberties, it stands alone; and from its democratic composition, we may well suppose that its sympathies will be

much more in favour of the people than of the monarch. In truth, this is the very circumstance, as we have just seen, which makes it so little to be relied on as a support to the royal authority. If, indeed, as happens in France, —and as probably must be the case wherever there is a king—the superior officers be appointed by the Crown, the executive government will have great facilities for paralysing the efforts of a National Guard, should it be suspected of hostile intentions. Besides this, the civil authorities to whom it is subservient, are of royal nomination, and may be changed at pleasure. Nay, the whole corps may be disbanded by an ordinance of the Prince, as we have seen occur under the reign of Charles X. Thus, the patriotic designs of the citizen soldiers might be baffled, at least for a time. Still, it is impossible to suppose but that the effects of this institution will manifest themselves sooner or later, and that the usurped power of the king will be less secure, than if the people had never been trained to arms, and accustomed to meet and unite in regiments and companies.*

Upon the whole, then, it appears, that though,

* See Note F.

in a democratical monarchy, a National Guard is undoubtedly an excellent institution, yet in some respects it is likely to be far less useful than its advocates have supposed; while in others, it will probably be more so than has been commonly imagined. Such, however, are the discordant elements of which that form of government is made up, that it seems very doubtful indeed, how far this or any other expedient will be found capable of giving it stability, or secure the happy union of Liberty with Order.

Having now treated of all the Binary combinations that may be made out of the simple forms of government, it only remains to be determined what are the merits of that system in which the three are united. Now, if it shall appear that this arrangement is preferable to any of those we have just considered, it will follow, that it is upon the whole, the best which the mind of man can devise; for I have already shewn the superiority of mixed government in general, over pure monarchies, aristocracies, or democracies.

Whatever reasonings go to establish the soundness of the principle of opposing influences as applied to politics, bear with peculiar force on

the union of the three powers. The grand argument in favour of two or more elements in the scheme of public administration, is, that one is constantly a check upon the other, and thus tends to prevent those excesses, which rarely fail to break out, wherever either a king, nobility, or people, rule with unlimited sovereignty. The principal danger to be apprehended from this mixture of powers, arises from the contests between them, which, if pushed to an extreme, may create general confusion, and terminate in the destruction of one or all of the parties.

Thus, in the republic of Florence, after a severe conflict, and much slaughter, the *Grandi* were completely subdued by the *Popolani* in the year 1343; whereas in that of Venice, the Patricians gradually usurped all power over the mass of the people, and founded a pure aristocracy. In France, previous to Louis XI., the supreme authority was shared between the monarch and his nobles; but after the reign of that crafty prince, the former by degrees became more despotic, and the latter less influential, until the throne having finally conquered the great, found itself all at once directly in presence of the democracy, which failed not soon to hurl it from its foundations.

This last combination we have found to be especially liable to violent shocks and convulsions, judging both from general reasoning, and from what little experience the world has yet had of such a form of policy. The union of democracy with aristocracy, and of monarchy with aristocracy, may be rendered far more stable, not only as theory would lead us to suppose, but, as is proved by the history of ancient Rome, and other states.

But the *peculiar* advantage of bringing in a third power, is, that thereby all too rude contests of opposing forces may be arrested, the combat moderated, and prolonged indefinitely. A system of checks is established, most admirably calculated to prevent the excesses of any of the parties, and to hinder any one or two of the opposing interests from annihilating the other. It is evident that the king has a decided motive for restraining the encroachments of the people; and it is little less apparent that he will be opposed to such aristocratical ascendancy as, while it might prove highly oppressive to the nation, could scarcely fail, at the same time, to threaten the royal prerogative. The nobles, on the other hand, have a decided interest not only in preventing the excesses of the multitude, but also in keeping within due bounds the power of the

crown, which, were it extended beyond measure, would bear hard on themselves, even more than humbler citizens. Lastly, the people are strongly impelled to curb all despotic tendencies, whether of the king or of the aristocracy.

But, it may be said, and has indeed, as we have seen, been objected by an able writer;* what is to prevent any two of the powers from combining to crush the other? The answer is obvious, the fear of one of the parties that itself would be the next victim, a sacrifice to the supremacy of its associate. It is this dread which will constantly tend to induce the third power to unite itself, in the contest, with the weaker, so as to prevent the last from being annihilated by its more sturdy antagonist. Thus, if the royal prerogative be threatened by the people, the aristocracy will rally round the throne, well-knowing, that should it fall, their own order would be buried under its ruins. If, on the other hand, the nobility be the object of popular attack, and its independent existence menaced, the king, for the same reason, will combine with the Great in resistance to democratic encroachment. These cases are quite evident, and will probably be disputed by none. But

* Mr. Mill.

what is to prevent the aristocracy and the monarch from uniting to oppress the people? Wherever the last has gained much influence, those are indeed natural allies, and may be supposed in general to go together. Such is the case however, only where the democracy is powerful. So long as it is not dreaded by either, they are, on the contrary, natural foes, as has been shewn in a former part of this disquisition, and are constantly at war with one another. It is only the increasing force of the commons, which causes them to lay aside their mutual dissensions, and join against an enemy become menacing to both. Previous to this, the people had been alternately courted by the contending parties, since become firm allies; and its former welfare, as well as its present growing authority, are, in great measure, the result of these combats between the king and the nobility. Thus, so long as the mass of the nation is poor, ignorant, and therefore unfit for self-government, so far from suffering from the combination of these two ruling powers, it is likely to be much less oppressed than if under the dominion of either singly; and when it becomes rich, instructed, and eager for political influence, it is well able to defend itself against all opponents. Besides this, under a constitution

founded on the union of the three powers, the aristocracy is never likely to lend itself, at the suggestions of the Crown, to any attempts which might really overthrow the national liberties, for the reason above mentioned, the dread lest all the advantages of such a proceeding should accrue to the latter, and much of the evil to themselves. Their peculiar privileges and dignities, not to say their great possessions, are intimately connected with the permanence of existing institutions, and no blow could be levelled against these by the executive, which would not fall particularly heavy upon themselves. The king, on the other hand, cannot be supposed to favour, beyond very narrow limits, any despotic attempts of the Great, well knowing, that an aristocracy powerful enough to subdue the commons, would soon reduce royalty to an empty pageant. So that, notwithstanding the alliance struck up between these lofty authorities through a common dread of popular encroachment, there still remains sufficient jealousy of each other, to prevent their union ever becoming so very intimate as to cause any great derangement in the body politic.

But the necessity of a contest between the different powers, which I allow to be unavoidable

under every form of mixed government, may, by some be considered as an invincible argument against this system altogether. But where, I would ask, are we to look for a plan of public rule by which combats between opposing parties may be prevented? Under one only that I am acquainted with; a pure despotism. Here indeed there is tranquillity, but it is the tranquillity of death.* Is it under democratic governments that we are to expect harmony and peace, apart from the struggles of contending factions? Alas! the history of the world tells a different tale. Whatever may be the merits of popular governments, and great, inestimable indeed they are, tranquillity, at all events, is not one of the number. In such communities there is far too much activity, too much life, to permit of that stillness, which some may consider the perfection of public rule, but which I believe can exist only where the faculties of man are enchained by the sovereign will of a master. What though there be neither king nor nobles for the people to contend against, will no sources of disunion spring up among themselves? How shall we find a remedy for what Paley calls "the incurable

* "Solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant."—*Tacitus.*

diversity of human opinions on all subjects short of demonstration ?" So long as religious discussion was prevented in Europe by the arts of priests, and the belief in the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope, so long was there peace and union in the Catholic church, but no sooner was the principle of free inquiry introduced, than sects arose without number. The same will ever be the case in politics. As a despotism over consciences can alone preserve an uniformity of faith, so nothing but the undisputed power of a temporal master can prevent differences of political creed, and maintain at least an outward tranquillity throughout the community. The very life and energy which work such wonders under popular governments are utterly inconsistent with the idea of repose. The activity of men in such states must find a vent, and if not engaged in foreign wars, they are sure to form themselves into parties at home. It is in vain to look for any system that shall unite every advantage. There are some which mutually exclude each other. Thus, we may safely pronounce the combination of the stillness of despotic monarchies, with the fire and vigour of free states, one quite impossible to be realized. The same energy which made Rome the mistress of the world,

was also, no doubt, the source of the various schisms which occurred under the republic, nor could these have been prevented, without extinguishing that sacred spirit, the cause of all its greatness.

If, in proof of the truth of these remarks, we refer to the history of the various republics which at different times have flourished in the world, such as those of ancient Greece, Rome, Florence and other Italian states of the middle ages, even Switzerland, which has passed through many more civil dissensions than perhaps the generality of readers are aware of; we shall possibly be told, that most of these were republics only in name, and that the troubles to which they found themselves exposed were the consequence of the aristocratical element which prevailed very largely in their composition. Indeed, the instances of pure democracies have hitherto been so very few, that our experience of them is very limited; so far, however, as it goes, it is perfectly in accordance with the principles above laid down. Athens is universally allowed to be the most remarkable example in history of a purely popular government, and I would ask, are we to look to it for a specimen of the happy results of this mode of rule in preventing the growth of faction

or of party? Did no intestine contests rage within its walls, no evil genius distract its counsels? Great as were the achievements of this marvellous people, tranquillity at least was not one of its attributes. This is so universally granted, that it is needless any longer to dwell on that example. In Florence, after the final defeat of the *Grandi*, it might have been hoped that no source of disunion could now remain to disturb the peace of the state. But no sooner were the ancient nobility out of the question, than the victors split into two opposite parties, the *Popolani grandi** and *Plebe*, who continued to war among themselves with as much acrimony as they had together formerly evinced against a common enemy. These dissensions convulsed the republic, until the *Plebe* got the pre-eminence, which, however, they were able to keep but three years, during which a frightful anarchy prevailed.

The United States of America is another case completely in point. Has the absence of a king or aristocracy in that hitherto fortunate country been accompanied by a freedom from all party disputes? So far is this from being the case, that barring actual combat in the field, no where

* The *Popolani grandi* were probably the richer merchants and tradesmen.

perhaps have civil dissensions run so high. The American papers teem with the most atrocious invectives of men of opposing principles against each other. To such an extent, indeed, was this carried, on a late election of President, that not only public but private life became the object of calumnies the most revolting, and no lies against individuals were too egregious to be hazarded in support of the favoured candidate. The Union, on this occasion, by the avowal of Americans themselves, presented a scene of the most flagrant political immorality, an utter contempt of the sacred recesses of home, and a total disregard even of that common respect due to the unpretending character of woman.

But dissensions of a more alarming nature have already manifested themselves, and still threaten the existence of the present confederation. A divergency of interests and opinions between the northern and the southern States has been openly shewn in some remarkable instances. On the occasion of the last war with Great Britain, a difference of views on this important question had nearly severed the Union in two; and to this want of harmony in its counsels alone, can we attribute so great a national insult as the burning of the capital by a handful of English.

It was this event which at length put an end to the diversity of opinions among Americans, and caused them to combine cordially against the authors of an attack, felt as equally dishonourable to all. The Tariff served again to stir up the slumbering embers of discord between the different sections of the Union; and some of the southern States even pretended to nullify the decisions of Congress, and threatened to withdraw themselves from the confederation. Lately, the slave question has begun to be the source of similar dissensions. Indeed, the last accounts from America are of a nature to give to every sincere well-wisher the most poignant anxiety for the welfare and success of the scheme of government established in the United States. It is not merely the riots that have occurred in various parts of the country which must tend to give us uneasiness, for these have frequently taken place even under the best established monarchies, but it is the *impunity* of the rioters which is calculated to excite a well-founded alarm. What; not property only, but lives have fallen a sacrifice to popular violence, and the authors of these excesses are allowed to escape unmolested! This is anarchy most complete, and cannot but give

us serious apprehensions for the permanence of existing institutions.

It appears, then, that we should in vain expect from a pure democracy that absence of internal combat which I allow must exist more or less under every form of mixed government; nay, under every possible mode of rule except the unlimited despotism of one. A pure aristocracy would certainly not be free from intestine struggles. Having no common enemy to contend with, the nobles would be sure to divide among themselves, and form parties more or less violently opposed to each other. To rest in peace seems completely contrary to the character of men in general; if they have no foes ready constituted, they are sure to make them. In Florence, the *Grandi* were perpetually at war among themselves, under the various banners of the Buondelmonti and Uberti, Bianchi and Neri, Cerchi and Donati, Guelphs and Ghibellines; until being exceedingly weakened by the successive expulsion of the defeated parties, the remainder of that body fell a more ready victim to the assaults of the democracy.*

Unless, then, we make up our minds to a pure

* See Machiavel Istor. Fior. lib. 11.

despotism, with its death-like tranquillity, there is no possibility of avoiding parties and intestine struggles of some kind or other. The grand object therefore is to moderate what we cannot prevent, and, at all events, to obviate the chance of any recurrence to arms or open violence, which ought to be kept as a last resource when all others fail. Seldom indeed does it happen, that the party who first resorts to this extremity has not occasion sooner or later to repent of its conduct. It is this faculty of moderating, and so prolonging indefinitely without an open rupture, the internal combats unavoidable under every form of policy except an unlimited monarchy, that constitutes the peculiar excellence of the government of the three powers. This has already been shewn. On this account mainly, I consider it superior to any binary combination of democracy with either of the other simple elements of government; while the reasons stated at the beginning of this disquisition, on the advantage of an union of different forces, will sufficiently explain the preference I give to it, not only over an unlimited monarchy or a pure aristocracy, but even over a constitution founded on the uncontrolled sovereignty of the people.*

* See Note G.

Here I must observe, before concluding, that even supposing it allowed that a purely popular government is the best possible in certain cases, yet would it be nevertheless true, that these cases are so peculiar, as to afford no rule at all as to what is most advisable in the ordinary state of the world. There are two grand causes which for ever threaten the existence of republics, and one or both of which have in fact hitherto proved fatal to such as have sprung up and disappeared from the theatre of the globe. These are intestine dissensions, in particular the contests between rich and poor; and military power. To secure the permanence of purely popular institutions, it is necessary not only that the mass of the nation be enlightened, moral, and religious, but also, what is in truth involved in the above qualifications, that there be no great body of poor, and even no large portion of the community dependent on precarious sources of subsistence. This necessity at once cuts off all old established and densely peopled countries, in which wealth and arts have made great progress, and where the soil is thickly studded with large manufacturing towns. A population of this sort, so liable from sudden changes in trade to pass from one extreme to the other, from high wages

and full employment to indigence and even starvation, must ever be highly dangerous, if not destructive to republican institutions. These masses of individuals collected in one spot, form, in periods of distress, the favoured subject for the designs of able demagogues. An empty stomach is the greatest of all revolutionists. Not to dwell upon the impossibility of freedom of election, which among a class of hungry artizans must ever be a vain chimera, how, I would ask, are the riots often unavoidable in such a state of things to be put down? In a condition of society like that in question, a military force seems absolutely indispensable to public order; but this again gives rise to a danger of a different description.

Nor let any one say that these revulsions in trade which throw out of employment great masses of men, are so rare as not to afford a sufficient argument against the probable stability of republican governments. On the contrary, they are unhappily quite in the usual course of things, and must consequently be expected from time to time. In all densely peopled, and, in particular, manufacturing countries, a strong executive seems therefore quite essential, and without the com-

mand of a large military force, how can it be strong?

Without a force of this description, what security for life and property, I may ask, would exist in England at the present day? There is something really tremendous in the idea of a district such as that around Manchester, which, within a radius of thirty miles, is said to contain a larger population than the same space round the Exchange of London, but which, on some stoppage in the usual channels of trade, may suddenly be reduced to a state bordering on starvation. Is it in such circumstances that the mass is fit to govern? If even under its present government, strongly built on aristocracy and monarchy, and protected by a formidable army, England has sometimes trembled at the news of riots in the manufacturing districts; what would happen were these ancient foundations removed, the military disbanded, and the sovereignty of the people not only proclaimed but acted up to? The experiment of a yeomanry force has been made with but little success; it was far more detested than the regular troops. Still, under a republican government it could be the only one admissible. But having already discussed at length the merits of such an institution, in treating of a National

Guard, it is not necessary to repeat what has formerly been said. Suffice it again to observe, that an executive which has only a force of this sort to rely on, cannot be very strong; for such a body is far too little under command, too subject to popular influence, to remissness, and all the changes of opinion which manifest themselves among the community at large, ever to be a certain defence in time of need.

The way in which civil dissensions between the rich and poor, the aristocracy and democracy, lead to the destruction of republics, and the rise of arbitrary power, is sufficiently manifest. Each party in the State in order to elevate itself and bring down its opponents, or at least to protect itself against them, is induced to choose a leader or chief; who being thus exalted and invested with power, should his faction prove successful, finds it often no difficult matter to retain his authority after the occasion which first gave origin to it has ceased. Thus Marius, Cæsar, and Cromwell, were heads of the popular party; Sylla and Pompey of the nobles. The people desire to secure their liberty against the oppressive power of the great; to bring them down to their own level from a dislike to social superiorities and privileges; perhaps even to seize upon

their property, as they did in the French Revolution. The aristocracy, on the other hand, wish to maintain their power and to persevere their property. Hence dissensions arise, which, if pushed on to violence, end in the tyranny of the leader of the triumphant party.

And here be it remarked, as Machiavel well observes, that men hold much more to their *possessions* than to their *power*, and defend the former with far greater vehemence than the latter, so that it is chiefly when the poor begin to attack the riches of the great, that civil war becomes inevitable. So long as the contest between the Patricians and Plebeians of Rome had in view only the participation of the latter in the civic honours and employments of the former, the struggle between them was carried on without bloodshed; but when the nobles thought their property in danger from the attempts of the Gracchi to revive the Licinian law, &c. they instantly rose in arms, and slaughtered their enemies. The constitution of Rome never recovered this blow. The people, in order to wreak their vengeance on the great, were willing to put themselves under the dominion of Marius; while the nobility, to defend their order against the violence of the mob, were fain to submit to

the perpetual dictatorship of Sylla. Thus fell the republic of Rome.

The advocates of pure democracy are apt, I know, to deny that the people have any such hankering after the possessions of the rich, as can be likely to endanger the security of property. The working classes, say they, are quite as much interested as any other in the support of this corner-stone of social prosperity; for, besides that they generally have some small property of their own, their steady employment essentially depends on the duration of public tranquillity. Whatever may be the cause which spreads distrust and alarm throughout the community, they are sure to be the first sufferers. Capitals formerly expended in the maintenance of labour, are now hoarded up, and cease to spread comfort and ease throughout the land. In answer to this, I would say, that the truth of these statements entirely depends upon what the condition of the people may be. If in general well off, especially if, as in Switzerland, and still more in the United States of America, each man be commonly proprietor of a portion of land and a house, I hesitate not to agree to the justice of these reflections. But if, instead of this, an immense portion of the community has nothing

but a few clothes, and perhaps some simple household furniture and utensils, as is much the case in England, and if many be not very secure in the possession even of these, the case is widely different. Let us remember, that the circumstance which peculiarly characterizes the poor, is regard to the present, and indifference to the future. The actual ills of life press so hard upon them, as completely to occupy the mind, and prevent the possibility of its being taken up with the evils of a distant day. A year hence is a remote period to a poor man. While the rich push foresight sometimes to an extreme, and torment themselves with what may never happen, the former is so immersed in the care of providing for every day wants, that he has neither time nor inclination to look beyond them. Thus we constantly find, that the more destitute are any people, the greater is their improvidence. Now, it is this circumstance which renders the people, if poor, peculiarly unfit to be trusted with political power. Supposing it capable of being proved most satisfactorily, that the condition of the great mass of the labouring population, instead of being bettered by a general seizure of the property of the rich, would in the long-run be deteriorated, still, it by no means follows that they might not be anxious for that event. If

their present lot be very miserable, that alone will engage their attention. Any change, then, which may hold out hopes of improving it, even for a short time, will be eagerly desired. What is futurity to a man who has scarcely bread to eat? And if his own fate some years hence be unable to fix his mind, how shall we believe him capable of weighing the interests of generations yet unborn?

But could we even suppose the poor man to be in a fit state for calculating coolly the consequences of a general seizure of the property of the rich, and to be convinced that the chances of improving his condition by such a measure were against him, still might he very well wish "to run the hazard of the die." He who has little to lose, and much, possibly, to gain, is naturally adventurous. Besides, that belief in his star, so common, as Adam Smith observes, to all, easily persuades a man that he is to be one of the fortunate. Some at least must gain prizes, and why not he as well as any other? Let the worst come, he cannot be much more destitute than at present; why then any longer hesitate?*

All this is upon the supposition that the

* Lotteries of all descriptions will ever be favourably received, because they depend for their success on a principle

poor, as a body, are not to be really benefited, even for their life-time, by a scramble for the property of the rich. But if this be very doubtful, nay, if there be good reason to think, that the present generation, at all events, will be great gainers by such a proceeding, we cannot but see immediately how strong the temptation may become, provided the power be ready to second the will. Indeed, I think it pretty certain, that there are many countries in which the ac-

common to the whole human race. Bacon classes among the *Idola Tribus*, or those sources of fallacy which belong to all classes of men in all ages, the being much more struck by one affirmative instance, than by many negative. This explains fully the vogue of even very disadvantageous lotteries. Nay more, as Bishop Butler has remarked, (Analogy of Religion, part ii. chapter 6.) "There are numberless instances in the daily course of life, in which all men think it reasonable to engage in pursuits, though the probability is greatly against succeeding." Where there is little to lose, and much to gain, the wildest schemes may not be irrational. The real practical question, however, in this as in similar cases, is, not what a cool impartial spectator after mature reflection might hit upon as best, but what the imagination of the parties interested would picture as desirable, and worthy of being attempted. Nothing is more common than for persons to act even knowingly against their real interest, overcome by the present temptation. How much more, then, must this operate, if the ultimate interest be doubtful to themselves, nay, to a by-stander!

tual poor would much improve their condition by laying hold of the vast possessions of those above them, though by the operation of the principle of population, the land might soon be as much covered with paupers as ever. At all events, such an occurrence could not take place without awful suffering on the part of many, and a most serious shock to the future prosperity of the nation. Yet, as I have said, the present race of poor might be the better. Thus, it seems not improbable that the lower classes existing in France at the period of the Revolution, gained more by forcibly seizing on the lands of the nobility and clergy, than they lost by the internal convulsions arising out of that great event, and the long series of foreign wars to which it gave rise.

Now, whether we suppose the present generation of poor likely to be benefited or not by a measure such as here contemplated, it is evident that their tendency towards it can be little if at all checked by instruction. For, not to dwell on the difficulty, if not impossibility of a very destitute population ever becoming greatly educated, from the want of time, means, and inclination, it may be observed, on the one supposition, that present ills utterly prevent the mind being open to receive and profit from instruction, re-

lative to the necessity of care for a future day; and on the other, that superior knowledge would only hasten the catastrophe.

These, then, are reasons which must ever render the mass of the people very unfit depositaries for political power, wherever, as a body, they are both poor and numerous.

Some writers have asserted, that government has been instituted to protect the poor against the rich; while others have maintained, on the contrary, that its object is to defend the possessions of the latter from the attacks of the former. The truth is, that it is instituted, or ought to be so, for both purposes. The rich have a tendency to oppress the poor, while these are no less inclined to seize upon the goods of their more fortunate neighbours. Hence the necessity for the union of aristocracy with democracy in any well-ordered government. As both are liable to be injured, each requires to have the means of defending itself against its opponent.

Here I cannot help remarking a law of the Romans, which shews how careful they were not to place power in the hands of the lower ranks of the people. The last class of citizens was excluded from serving in the legions. By this regulation they intended no doubt, not only to

add honour to the military career, but also to guard against the danger of their armies being filled with persons who might hope to gain rather than lose by overthrowing the institutions of the state. Nor was this law violated until the time of Marius, on his departure for the Jugurthine war. Accordingly, that change was among the causes which hastened the ruin of the republic, and the establishment of military despotism. The above regulation is not one of the least proofs of the sagacity of that wonderful people. Another cause of the fall of the commonwealth, was the inordinate increase of needy citizens, which was owing to various circumstances, partly to the number of manumitted slaves, partly to the influx of poor from a distance, attracted to the capital by the gratuitous distributions of corn. These formed a body ripe for all disturbances.

It appears from what has just been stated, that republican institutions are possible only in countries chiefly agricultural, or at least, where no great masses of individuals are brought together so poor, as to be liable from time to time, on a failure of the ordinary sources of employment, to be driven to the verge of want. This, then, at once excludes a great part of the world,

and especially those regions where arts and civilization have long flourished. On the other hand, a country like the United States of America, is precisely in that condition most favourable for the success of such an experiment. There, the great mass of the people is employed in agriculture, and is scattered over an immense surface; wages are high, and subsistence easily obtained, and consequently there are fewer poor than in any other part of the globe. A vast and fertile virgin territory amply repays the activity of its cultivators. But this is a condition which will not last for ever. To argue, because a republic is now possible in that country, that therefore it will still be so when the territory becomes densely peopled and covered with large manufacturing towns; when the reward of labour is perhaps half its present amount, and the indigent numerous; is, to say the least, not a little rash and illogical.

But there is another circumstance which seems essential to the permanence of republican institutions, on account of the second danger to which they are peculiarly exposed, namely, military power. This circumstance is, that the States thus governed be so situated as to have no neighbours immediately in contact with them, or at

least none at all equal to themselves. For if this be not the case, a military force must be kept up for the sake of defence, and wars, we must calculate, cannot always be avoided. These, of course, will be doubly to be dreaded on the supposition of the republic being surrounded by States under governments different from its own, under monarchical rule for instance. Between these two political forms there is a natural enmity which can scarcely fail to break out in open warfare. But against a monarchy and a large standing army, a republic with a militia only could have no chance at all; and therefore it must of necessity adopt the same means of defence as are possessed by its neighbours. In such circumstances, a regular military force becomes absolutely essential to the national independence. But in avoiding Scylla, we run into Charybdis. This standing army, if it succeed in protecting the country from foreign invasion, will, on the other hand, almost infallibly, sooner or later prove fatal to its institutions. Even in time of peace, a force of this nature is formidable to the existence of republics, but in war much more so. In peace, the spirit of the citizen, under a well regulated system, and, in particular, by a frequent renewal of the indi-

viduals composing the army, may still bear it over that of the soldier; but in war, and after a certain absence from home, the case is very different. The man of arms then becomes a being belonging to a distinct corps in the state having interests and desires different from those of the community at large. He naturally longs for a government, which, while it keeps up the body of which he forms a member, shall enrich and ennoble him. The very habit of military discipline, and of implicit obedience to the commands of one, prepares his mind for monarchical rule. Returning triumphant from the discomfiture of his country's enemies, he acquires a prodigious idea of his own importance, and of the debt of gratitude due to him. As a reward for all his hardships, he must however expect, after being caressed perhaps for a moment, to be sent back to mingle undistinguished with the crowd of citizens for whom he has fought and bled. Was it for this he overcame so many difficulties, and braved so many dangers? Shall a President or Directory who have sat quietly at home, and who perhaps never in their lives saw a shot fired, give the law to him who has faced the enemy in a hundred conflicts? Do not both pride and interest urge him rather to rally round the general

who so oft has led him on to victory, and to proclaim that man his prince in peace who has so well proved his ability to command in war? Such is the temper of mind natural to the victorious soldier of a republic, to take advantage of which, no extraordinary ambition on the part of his leader is required. On the contrary, he must be a character of uncommon virtue and moderation to resist so great a temptation.

In proof of the truth of these reflections, we have only to turn to the history of those republics, the fate of which is so well known. What Marius, Sylla, and especially Cæsar, were in the ancient world, Cromwell and Bonaparte have been in the modern. Nay, even the rising republic of the United States narrowly escaped this danger. Nothing but the unexampled virtue of Washington could have prevented such a catastrophe. After the war of independence was brought to a close, the victorious army became excessively discontented with the conduct of government towards them, and indeed broke out into open mutiny. This was a critical moment. One word of encouragement from their beloved commander, and the republic was stifled in its birth. The troops were all anxiety to march against a government, which, as they thought,

had behaved so ungratefully to them the liberators of their country. But that commander was no ordinary man, vulgar ambition had no place in his breast. He spake the words of pacification, and the storm was hushed. The army was disbanded, and the danger ceased.

An especial cause of the overthrow of the Roman republic, was, as Machiavel remarks, the prolongation of the military commands. So long as wars were carried on at no great distance from home, the general in chief might be changed every year, and was so in fact at the annual election of consuls, one of whom always took the command of the army. While this system prevailed, the danger of any leader ingratiating himself so much with the troops as might prove injurious to the liberties of his country, was of course not very great. But when the arms of Rome were carried beyond the Alps, these frequent changes became impossible, and, at all events, were discontinued. This new plan of policy, favourable no doubt to its military success, was, on the other hand, fatal to its existence as a commonwealth. The army with which Cæsar enslaved his country had been under his command for several years, engaged in the conquest of Gaul and Britain.

The attempts of a military leader are greatly favoured by the presence of the other cause of the ruin of republics, internal dissensions. These afford a pretext to an ambitious general for interfering in civil affairs, and, at the same time, always give him a party whose interests he may affect to advance, while in fact studious only for his own. As has been before observed, when factions become violent, their first care is the destruction of an adversary, no matter at what risk. Nothing is so blind as party spirit, because nothing is so much domineered by passion. Thus one or other of the combatants is glad to enrol itself under the banners of the fortunate soldier, little conscious of being all the while the dupe of his designs. Favoured by such dissensions, Marius, Sylla, Cæsar, Cromwell, and Bonaparte, made themselves masters of the State. The last, on his return from Egypt, nay, even after his first campaign in Italy, found himself courted by every party; royalists and republicans, both moderate and exalted. Each thought to make him the instrument of the success of their cause. Accordingly, those with whom he joined himself were not a little surprised to find, soon after the 18th Brumaire, that instead of governing, as they had vainly hoped to do by him as their

tool, they had fallen, like all their antagonists, under the hands of a master. Siéyes and Lucien Bonaparte were among the most illustrious dupes on this occasion.

If Florence and other Italian republics in the middle ages escaped a military despotism, it was only because they had adopted among themselves a system of warfare, which, in contests with other foes, reduced them to utter imbecility, and thus gave them up a helpless prey to the attacks of the first foreign force brought against them. For a long time previous to the invasion of Charles VIII., the different States of Italy, republics or otherwise, had ceased either to be armed to a man, as was the case at the first foundation of some of them, or even to keep up a national military corps of any description. Wars were carried on by mercenary captains called Condottieri, who had under their command a body of soldiers ready to be employed and paid by the best bidder. Under a system of this kind, continual contests were unavoidable, for no sooner was one at an end, than it became the interest of these captains to get up a new quarrel between some of the powers; for, on the continuance of wars all their wealth and importance depended. But if peace was never of long duration, neither

were contests productive of much bloodshed. We read repeatedly of great victories in which scarcely a man was killed, and very few wounded.* This was owing, partly to the armies being chiefly composed of horsemen armed cap-a-pee and almost invulnerable; partly to the condottieri generals having no interest in pushing matters to an extremity. Their aim was not to terminate a war, but, on the contrary, to prolong it as much as possible. Thanks to this imbecile system, the beautiful land of Italy became the ready spoil of the French, and of every other nation by whom it was afterwards attacked. So long as it was left to itself, however, this mode of policy certainly prevented the evils of military despotism, for the mercenary chiefs being always aliens, had no real party in any city; but in avoiding domestic tyranny, if such was really the intention of the different States, they only fell a more helpless sacrifice to foreign ambition.

Here I may remark a principal cause which

* In the battle of Anghiari, for instance, one of the most famous of those times, gained by the Florentines over Niccolò Piccinino, a condottiere in the service of the Duke of Milan, one man only was killed, and he too not by blows, but having fallen from his horse he was trodden under foot. See Machiavel. Istor. Fior. lib. v.

rendered republics far more possible in the ancient than in the modern world. This was the non-existence of standing armies. In the best days of Greece, these were quite unknown. While all were obliged to bear arms, they were the exclusive profession of none. This is so true, that, in time of war, it was found very difficult, often impossible, to keep the troops in the field at those periods of the year when they were required at home for the peaceful labours of agriculture. Even Rome had only a militia force till after the second Macedonian war. Previous to that era, the legions were annually renewed by new levies, and all but the poorest citizens were obliged to serve in their turn. The first standing armies we read of in Europe, seem to have been those of Carthage and Macedonia, the former of which nearly overthrew the rising empire of Rome, and under its able general maintained itself for sixteen years in the enemy's country; the latter trampled on the liberties of Greece, and achieved the conquest of the East.

That the Romans, without a regular force, should have been able to subdue all their neighbours, may not appear so surprising, since they were in this respect on a par; but that they should have vanquished states where arms had

long been a separate profession, may well excite our wonder. But we may observe, that on such occasions they generally were unsuccessful at first, and as the war continued, some of the best troops probably remained under arms, while the feeble or more unskilful retired or were cut off, so that by degrees the composition of the army improved. Thus both Pyrrhus and Hannibal at first carried all before them, and even the Macedonian war which decided the fate of that empire, was for two or three campaigns conducted with but little success. But at length the far-famed Macedonian phalanx was obliged to yield to the Roman legion.

I have shewn above, that a republic having one or more monarchies in its vicinity, must have a peculiar difficulty in preserving its institutions; for either it will have no standing army, in which case it cannot but fall a prey to its more powerful and better armed neighbour, as we have just seen happened in ancient Greece and modern Italy; or should it adopt a force of that description, the commonwealth will be likely to fall a victim to military power at home. But were we even to suppose it surrounded by states with constitutions similar to its own, yet it by no means follows, that it could escape that

dilemma. Neither our experience of men in geral, nor of democracies in particular, authorize us to conclude, that republics, any more than nations differently governed, are likely to live always at peace with each other. It is impossible, at least very improbable, but that now and then disputes will arise, which can be decided by the sword alone. As, in this case, that country which shall first maintain a regular army is likely to be the conqueror; so common regard for self-preservation would naturally induce the other to adopt a similar course. The same difficulty then as before presents itself. Whichever of the rival republics is victorious in the contest, will be liable to pay dearly for its extended dominion and military glory. A fortunate soldier will arise to trample under foot the modest chair of a President, and twine his hard earned laurels around a regal diadem.

It appears, therefore, that republics can then only enjoy perfect safety when they have no neighbours, or at least none of any consequence as compared with themselves. Now this again is precisely the position of the United States of America. Neighbours they have none, except some helpless tribes of wild Indians, and the as yet thinly peopled colony of Canada. In this

respect, as well as in that formerly mentioned, the condition of this country is quite peculiar; very different certainly from any thing on our side of the Atlantic. At present, an army of no more than 6000 men may amply suffice for all that is required of it; but were a separation to take place, between the North and the South for instance, the case would be very different. There would then be two rival powers in presence. From this would arise the necessity felt by each of being prepared against invasion, and consequently of maintaining a more numerous army constantly on foot. Thus the danger would commence, which, on the first war, might prove fatal to the democratical institutions of one or both of the hostile communities.

Here I must make an observation, as it appears to me of considerable importance; that, so far as danger from the cause we are now considering is concerned, a republic is far more possible in an insular situation, such as that of Great Britain, than on a continent. For this there are some very powerful reasons. In the first place, how great soever may be the naval force which any island may choose to keep up, there never can arise from such means of defence any real peril to republican institutions. A sailor is

powerful on his own element alone; the moment he puts his foot on shore, he not only loses all his superiority, but becomes greatly inferior to the landsman; so that even a very indifferent militia could easily overcome the most numerous body of seamen that might by any possibility be brought against the existing government. Accordingly, history, so far as I am aware, affords no example of a revolution brought about by a naval armament. Again, it is quite evident, that an insular state can much more readily avoid land warfare, than a continental one. By turning all its attention and all its spare resources to naval affairs, it may become so powerful at sea, as safely to depend for defence upon its fleets alone. At all events, a much smaller standing army will on that account suffice. Besides, being separated by water from all its neighbours, it can more easily keep on good terms with them, and is manifestly free from many of those sources of dispute from which wars take their origin. Nothing is so favourable to good fellowship as the living a little apart. This is true on a great scale as well as a small. Lastly, should after all, foreign wars be sometimes unavoidable, whether from the ambition of the republican islanders themselves, or the pro-

vocations of their continental neighbours, still, in the present case, these might be rendered of comparatively little danger to democratic institutions. For, suppose the army victorious, and ready to return home on the completion of its labours, it is at once stopped by an impassible barrier. Cæsar, with his Gallic legions, could cross the Alps, much more the feeble Rubicon; but had the ocean rolled between him and Rome, the mistress of the world *might* never have been enslaved by the conqueror at Pharsalia.

The government at home, having of course the command of the sea, has it always in its power to bring back the troops by small detachments, and to land them at various and distant parts of the island. Thus a numerous and triumphant army may be so dispersed, as completely to obviate all danger to the political institution of the country to which it belongs. For these reasons, it appears to me very clear, that an insular republic would be less liable to fall a victim to military ambition, than a continental one, and therefore that *so far* this form of government is more possible in the former situation than in the latter.

The history of our own country, however, sufficiently proves, that the danger, though less in

such a position, is far from being totally absent. The arms employed in civil dissensions, and rendered indispensable by the necessity of repressing tumult or sedition, may be used to overthrow the constitution, as well as those engaged in foreign service, though a force at home is undoubtedly more capable of being kept under control of the civil power, than a victorious distant army.

The example of Switzerland may perhaps be adduced in opposition to these reasonings, as affording an instance of a republic maintaining itself for several centuries, even though surrounded by states with governments different from its own. Unquestionably this is one of the most successful commonwealths which the world has yet seen, the most remarkable certainly in modern times. Much of this stability, no doubt, has been owing to the very difficult nature of the country, composed in great part of the most lofty and inaccessible mountains in Europe; much also to the brave and sturdy character of its inhabitants.* But we may well doubt whether even these causes could have defended it for such a length of time, had it not been for the mutual jealousy of its two most powerful neigh-

* See Note H.

bours. Situated betwixt two rival potentates, each strongly interested in preventing the aggrandizement of the other, it owes its independent existence, much more to the enmity between France and Austria, than to its own internal force. Indeed, at the end of the last century, the Confederation was reduced to such a state of weakness, that it almost fell to pieces of itself; and so crazy was the fabric, that at the first shock of revolutionary France, the whole edifice came at once to the ground. Very little resistance was offered to this foreign invasion, and chiefly by the hardy mountaineers of Uri, Schwêitz, and Underwalden. The people had ceased to be, as in the glorious days of Granson and of Morat, an armed nation; and dissensions between the Cantons, and between these and their *subjects*, (for many had such) added to the weakness of the old Confederacy, and brought it to a close.*

It other respects, it is evident that the con-

Formerly, many of the Cantons had *subjects* who participated not at all in the government, but were administered by *Baillis* sent by the Sovereign Canton. Thus Argovie and Vaud were subject to Berne. One half even of the little Canton of Schweitz was ruled by the other. Indeed, the case was quite common.

dition of Switzerland is exactly that most favourable to democratical institutions, the population being chiefly pastoral and agricultural. Almost every man, (in some Cantons, certainly, if not in all) is proprietor of a portion of land. Large towns there are none; and no where is there any considerable collection of individuals liable to sudden and violent reverses. Geneva, which has been added to the union only since the overthrow of Bonaparte, contains not more than 30,000 persons; and no city in old Switzerland has upwards of 20,000, while Berne alone comes up to that number. These circumstances make a fundamental difference between it and populous manufacturing countries. If to all this we add the steady, virtuous, and above all, religious character of the inhabitants, and the general diffusion of education, we must allow, that except in the case of the United States of America, the experiment of a republic could never have been tried under more favourable auspices. A country in such a condition must be considered not as a rule for others, but as a peculiar instance to which few parallels can be found.

But whatever be the advantages which Switzerland has derived from the popular nature of its institutions—advantages, indeed, so great

as, notwithstanding numerous, and often violent dissensions, to render this region one of the most fortunate and truly happy on the surface of the globe; yet we have it not in our power to adduce this as an example or proof of the excellence of purely democratical governments. For though a federal republic, the constitutions of many of the Cantons were, till of late, any thing but strictly popular. The little states, no doubt, surrounding the lake of the four Cantons, Uri, Schweitz, and Underwalden, as also Glaris and Appenzell, composed almost entirely of shepherds, and in which the largest town is but a village, have always been exceedingly democratic. They are perhaps the only instance since the days of ancient Athens, of a people meeting in a body to perform the duties of legislators. But the larger and more populous Cantons, Berne especially, by far the most extensive and influential of the old Confederacy, were governed very differently. Who has not heard of the Patricians of Berne, a body almost as famous in a small way, as the renowned aristocracy of Venice? In truth, the government of this, as well as of some other Cantons, was in the hands of a comparatively limited number of men. Many parts of the country, as has been before observed, had

no share at all in the public management of affairs, but having originally been conquered, continued ever afterwards to be ruled as subjects. This certainly is not a picture of a pure, unmixed democracy. And what is more remarkable, Berne, in the government of which the aristocratical element so largely prevailed, was distinguished among its confederates for the success of its policy, and the wisdom of its internal administration.

Now, indeed, since the late revolutions of 1830–1, the democracy is every where triumphant, and new constitutions have been drawn up upon the most popular principles. In the Canton of Vaud, for instance, suffrage is universal, and votes are given by ballot. It remains to be seen how far these changes will prove successful.

From all that has now been said, the last position which I undertook to prove, seems to me sufficiently established, namely, that were it even granted, that an unmixed democracy is the best possible government *where the circumstances permit*, yet these circumstances are so peculiar, as to afford no rule at all as to what is most advisable in the ordinary state of the world, either as it now exists, or as we have a right to believe it likely to be constituted in time to come.

My conclusion, therefore, in favour of the government of the three powers, as in *most cases* the best, would, even in making the above allowance in favour of unrestricted popular sovereignty, remain unshaken. But for an examination of pure democracy in general, as well as the other unmixed forms of public sway, I must refer to the commencement of this Disquisition.

In the above observations on the circumstances which seem essential to the stability of a pure democracy, supposing it granted that the stability of such a government is probable or possible under any, if I have dwelt less than may be thought proper, on the necessity of virtue and religion, it is not from want of a deep conviction that such a system would never succeed without them; but simply because this opinion, with regard to the first at least, seems not to be disputed. The notion that any plan which confers great power on the people, much less that which establishes their undivided sovereignty, could ever endure without that people being both enlightened and virtuous in no common degree, is one which has perhaps at no time been seriously entertained by any thinking man.* And if this

* For some observations on the necessity of virtue in republics, see note E.

be true of virtue, it must also apply to religion, its constant associate, and most solemn and important sanction. We may occasionally, perhaps not very unfrequently, meet with an individual of great moral worth, yet destitute of religion; a nation, never. Persons naturally of calm temperaments, or whose intellects have been cultivated, and passions restrained by an enlightened philosophy; freed, moreover, by their social position from strong temptations, may keep in the paths of rectitude without any great difficulty; but the mass once let loose from the check of religion, are likely to become utterly depraved. No people have ever been distinguished for the excellence of their political institutions, and the degree of liberty which they have enjoyed, without being at the same time remarkable for their attachment to this the grandest of human interests. So much, indeed, was one of the most profound of writers impressed with this truth, that he considers, notwithstanding all the errors of Paganism, that Rome was fully as much indebted for its successful career to the religious institutions of Numa, as to the military and political regulations of Romulus.* And in modern times, if

* Machiavel, Discorsi, lib. i. cap. xi.

we observe what nations have enjoyed, or still enjoy the greatest portion of civil liberty, we shall invariably find that among them religion has been more than usually cherished. This holds true of Great Britain, Holland, Switzerland, and the United States of America.

To trace the source of this connection between religion, virtue, and civil liberty, belongs more to a moral or metaphysical treatise, than to one of this description; it is sufficient for the politician to be assured of the fact.

Not dwelling then upon those qualities, the necessity for which will perhaps not be seriously disputed, and which, it may be hoped, will, in the course of time, be spread more and more through the world; my object has been to shew from considerations drawn from the essential nature of things, that is, from the most acknowledged and permanent principles of human nature; the unavoidable condition of the great mass of mankind in almost all old countries, particularly those very advanced in wealth; and from the circumstances in which nations are *usually* placed in respect to their neighbours; that a pure democracy neither is now, nor ever can be a form of government *generally* practicable. The arguments brought forward at the

commencement of this disquisition, go still farther, for, if correct, they shew that under *no* circumstances, is this scheme of civil policy likely to be of long duration.

From the whole of the foregoing disquisition, the conclusion then is this; that mixed governments are preferable to simple ones, and the union of the three powers superior to every other combination.

The examples of such a system which the history of the world affords, have all been, so far at least as I know, remarkably successful. And first as to ancient times. If we be permitted to assume, that the annals of Rome during its kingly government are on the whole to be relied on, it would appear, that for upwards of 200 years, the state enjoyed a prosperity uninterrupted, under a constitution in which the supreme power was divided between a monarch, an aristocratic senate, and popular assemblies. And what still more shews the solidity of the system, when at last, owing to the despotic attempts of the second Tarquin, regal authority was abolished, the change to a mixed republic took place without any internal convulsion whatsoever.

The instance of Sparta is perhaps still more

remarkable, as well as less liable to dispute. Among a people noted for its fickleness, and the perpetual inconstancy of its various governments, Lacedæmon alone maintained its institutions for a period of more than 600 years, dating from the reformation of the commonwealth by Lycurgus. Its double dynasty of kings had still a greater continuance, as they began to reign long before that event. Now the form of public rule which existed in that state, was of the same nature as the one just described, except that the throne was constantly occupied by two sovereigns instead of one. A senate chosen for life, and geral assemblies of all Spartans arrived at the age of thirty, completed the political structure. The existence of an aristocratical element is besides proved by the prerogative of primogeniture which formed a part of the laws of Lycurgus. The only striking change which we read of in this scheme, was the appointment of the Ephori, about 130 years after that great reformer, who being created as an additional check to the power of the senate and the kings, were in many respects similar to the tribunes of the people at Rome.

In modern times, the example of Great Britain is a host in itself. But notwithstanding all

the praises which have been lavished on our happy constitution, its peculiar, its distinctive claims to admiration are, I conceive, not always quite understood. Other states possibly might be shewn, in which a popular control as effectual has been exercised over the public counsels without anarchy or confusion, and perhaps even for as long a period; but where shall we look for an instance of a country such as England now is, which has been able to unite liberty with order? To obtain the blessings of free government without turbulence, in a district like Switzerland, where almost every man is a proprietor of the soil, where no large towns exist, and no body of poor is to be found, or even in a great region such as the United States, for similar reasons, is, comparatively speaking, a very easy task. But when a land comes to be covered with vast manufacturing towns, enclosing within a small compass a population not only exceedingly numerous, but likewise indigent; liable also, from many accidents, to be deprived in a moment even of their hard-earned subsistence; then the excellence of a government is indeed put to the test. Now, I affirm, that the world never before saw a case of the co-existence of any system of freedom with such a condition of things as this.

All political philosophers, prior to experience, would have been justified in denying its possibility. Virtue, and the absence of extreme poverty in the mass of the people, have been always considered as indispensable to any scheme of popular influence. The British constitution has shewn to the world, for the first time, a wonderful degree of liberty in a state of society where the most powerful elements of disorder are found. This, then, is the grand, the peculiar merit of the frame of government under which we live. Accustomed, as we are, to the steady working of our political machine, we probably are not so much struck as we ought to be with this truth, for what is familiar ceases to be thought surprising, but the phenomenon, not the less, stands alone in the annals of the world. But let us not presume too much on the strength of the edifice. It is well to be aware on what side danger is to be apprehended. Neither from the crown, nor yet from the aristocracy is peril now to be dreaded, but from the already prodigious and constantly increasing growth of the manufacturing population. So that our very prosperity so much vaunted, may prove our greatest foe. The king and the aristocracy are on the contrary essential, now, perhaps, more than ever, to

the existence of any system of free government in England; for were they laid low, nothing but a military despotism would save us from pillage and anarchy. For what else could preserve us for a moment, in times of distress, from the hundreds of thousands of cotton-spinners of Manchester and its neighbourhood? It may, indeed, on this account, be said, I think, with truth, that a commonwealth is far less practicable in Great Britain now, than in the days of Charles I. notwithstanding the great increase of knowledge since that period. Let those, if any, who dream of a republic in England, look at Lancashire and tremble.

As a corroboration of what has just been said, I need only refer to the history of our country since the peace of 1815. We there find that the most serious attacks made against the constitution, such as the suspension of the Habeas Corpus law, and other restrictive measures well known by the name of the *six acts*, were passed in consequence of riots in the manufacturing districts. The upper classes, in order to save themselves, were glad to entrust the executive with extraordinary powers. This may serve to shew where peril awaits us.

But some will say, to what purpose point out an evil without specifying the remedy? To this

I have only to reply, that it is always the duty of a political reasoner to mark where danger lies; for though *he* should not be able to hit upon a cure or preventive, others perhaps may be more fortunate. It must surely be advantageous to know where the fortress is least secure, that there our principal care may be directed. And if an acquaintance with our real condition, and with the storms which threaten our safety, should lead the minds of reflecting men to consider, whether some wide and deep reform of our manufacturing system be possible; whether some means may not be devised to improve the morals and condition of a great part of the population, then these remarks shall not have been written in vain.

NOTES.

NOTES.

Note A.

The powers of Europe seem now becoming seriously alarmed at the rising influence of Russia. This is not extraordinary. It is only wonderful that the feeling should have been so long in spreading amongst them. In addition to the vast dominion which it already possesses, two circumstances in particular render Russia very formidable to other nations; the nature of its government, and the genius of its people. In regard to the first, it is not easy to conceive any system more adapted for conquest than that which, to the secrecy and promptitude of a monarchical rule unrestrained by constitutional forms, adds the stability and steady undeviating policy which result from the real though concealed influence of a powerful aristocracy. And, as to the latter, perseverance, it is well known, is the strongest

characteristic of the Sclavonic race. To this the history of unfortunate Poland bears ample testimony, and every page of the annals of Russia attests the same truth. For a long succession of years it has gone on, slowly perhaps, but securely, adding province after province to its dominions; and what it has gained it has never afterwards relinquished. Not too anxious to pounce upon its prey, it calmly watches a fit occasion, like a power that has faith in its futurity; but having once fixed its eagle talons in the destined spoil, nothing can tear the carcase from its gripe. The slowness of its progress is in truth one of the most alarming symptoms in its career; for that which is to last for ages is not built up in a day. Rome was fully 700 years before it reached its acme of empire. Russia consolidates as it goes along, nor is anxious after new conquests until it has well secured the old. Nay, in the moment of victory it can even make a show of moderation, and, like the ancient Romans, is content to take a little at first, that with greater security it may seize more hereafter; a course assuredly far more wise than by an over anxiety to possess the whole to drive an enemy to desperation, and excite the alarm of all other potentates.

France, on the contrary, would be a nation comparatively little to be dreaded, even though its territory were equal in extent to the northern Colossus. At many periods of its history has it poured its armies over Europe, and gained more in a few years than any other people in a century. But the impetuosity which knew how to conquer, was not united to the constancy which teaches how to retain. Notwithstanding the numerous invasions of Italy, for instance, undertaken at various times, not one foot of land does it now possess in a country which, more than all others, appeared a helpless prey.

From what has now been said, it will, I think, appear, that nothing but the strictest union of all the other powers of Europe can possibly preserve that continent from the inroads of its formidable neighbour. But in the East, the way seems open before it. Political prophecies, it has often been said, are dangerous things. Without, however, pretending to any extraordinary foresight, what, I would ask, but some very unexpected events, can stop the advance of these conquerors, until they reach the banks of the Indus? Is it to the feeble throne of Persia that we must look for such a barrier? Vain indeed would be the supposition. From the Indus to the

Nile, no power presents itself which can be expected finally to arrest their triumphant march. That these events will take place, seems as probable as any thing in external politics can well be; but as to the time, that no man knoweth. Once arrived on the confines of India, they will meet a foe, who, with a rich and populous country behind, and at least equal skill in war, may perhaps effectually resist those whose supplies and reinforcements must be brought from a distance, across sandy deserts; but previously, no permanent stop will probably be put to their career. And as Russia will of course bring its manners and religion along with it, this nation may become an instrument in the hands of Providence for the regeneration of some of the finest provinces of the East, for spreading the knowledge of a purer faith, and raising the holy symbol of Christ on the downfall of the crescent of Mohammed.

One event alone seems capable of preventing this consummation, namely, a splitting of the empire. But under a government such as that of Russia, this danger is perhaps little to be dreaded. This opinion is founded on the existence of that rich aristocracy to which I have before alluded. For, as the monarch appoints the

governors of the far provinces, it must always be his true policy to select those members of that body whose vast possessions at home will be a sure pledge of their good behaviour at a distance. Where the rulers of remote regions are mere soldiers of fortune or successful adventurers, owing all to the bounty of their master, they may often be tempted to raise the standard of rebellion; but if the lords of ample domains, and the descendants of noble houses, they may well hesitate to sacrifice their present fortune and fame, for a very uncertain prospect of sovereignty.

Note B.

There can be little doubt that the republic of Rome so long escaped military domination, principally on account of the strong mixture of aristocracy that prevailed in it, and which of course was felt, as in other things, so likewise in the composition of the army. During the earlier periods, Consuls, who were the leaders in war as well as civil magistrates, were selected exclusively from the

patricians, and we may therefore be very sure that the inferior military grades were abundantly filled by the members of the same body. Indeed, the law or custom which rendered it necessary that any person who aspired to the higher offices of the commonwealth should have borne arms for ten years at least, insured the military service of all young men of family and ambition. The reasons above stated prove how deeply politic was this enactment. The absolute exclusion of the *capite censi*, or poorest citizens, from the ranks; and even of those somewhat richer, the *proletarii*,* except in pressing emergencies, seems to have been dictated by a wisdom equally admirable. No doubt, there were also other causes which helped to secure Rome for so long a period from the dominion of the sword. Among these, I may mention the frequent, nay the annual renewal of the members of the army, which was practised while wars were as yet confined to Italy; and the short continuance of the power of the chief, also limited to a year. Several good effects resulted from these regulations. First, the period of service being very short, the spirit

* The *Proletarii* were supposed to be possessed of 1500 Asses.

of the citizen could not well be sunk in that of the warrior; secondly, the leader had not sufficient time to ingratiate himself too much with the soldiery; and lastly, the whole nation being thus inured to arms, no fraction of the people could hope to enslave the rest. The division of the command,* or of the forces of the state, between two consuls, was also, in this point of view, a salutary policy. Nor amidst these causes must we forget the public virtue and respect to the laws of their country, so deeply impressed from infancy on every Roman breast. A people, who, when flushed with victory, and heated with resentment against the nobles, could so far venerate the institutions of their city, as to refuse to enter its walls with arms in their hands, and content themselves with a secession to the sacred mountain, fully deserved to be the conquerors of the world.

The security which the Romans felt against personal ambition, founded on the solidity of their government, sufficiently accounts for the circumstance by which it is pre-eminently distinguished among all the republics of antiquity,

* Before the battle of Cannæ, Æmilius Paulus and Terentius Varro, not being able to agree as to the proper movements, took the command day about.

namely, the general absence of injustice and ingratitude towards its most remarkable citizens. Rome had not, like Athens, been tyrannised over by a Pisistratus, and for a long time, for the reasons now given, had little to dread from the evil designs of its own sons. Whereas, in the latter, that watchful jealousy, often amounting to ingratitude, was perhaps indispensable to the safety of a democratical commonwealth. The treatment of Scipio Africanus by his fellow-countrymen is almost a solitary exception to the above remark, and besides, the too haughty conduct of that individual might be some excuse for them.

In our own country, the particular composition of the army is one of the principal safeguards against military despotism; though the existence of a monarch is another powerful defence against upstart ambition. Should the king himself ever attempt to rule despotically by means of the soldiers, he would meet with an insuperable obstacle in the resistance of the officers, greatly interested in the present order of things. And the most brilliant talents, the most wonderful good fortune, could never be of any avail on the part of an aspiring general, when opposed not only by an united aristocracy,

military and civil, but also by all the force, material as well as moral, which guards an ancient dynasty of kings.

NOTE C.

Many instances of this occur in the history of Florence. The anxiety of one party to get the better of its opponents, aided probably by a general lassitude and common wish for repose, the result of long-continued disturbances, frequently led to the elevation of some individual to whom the liberties of the city were intrusted. Thus Robert king of Naples, his brother, then his son, afterwards Lando d'Agobbio, and lastly Walter duke of Athens, were successively chosen for this purpose. But as these were always aliens, and consequently had no deeply rooted party of their own in the state, and as moreover they failed not soon to abuse their irresponsible authority, they were very quickly pulled down from their high station and driven away. The same party who had been most active in their elevation, was often as anxious as any other to get rid of them. This is natural enough. Those who have been

chiefly instrumental in making the fortunes of any individual, have so great an opinion of the debt of gratitude due to them, that to satisfy them becomes no easy matter; and if to the common evils of tyranny be added the pain of disappointment, and indignation at being duped, we can well imagine that no class of men will be found so hostile.

His present majesty of the French has found it no slight task to content king-makers.

Note D.

There is a curious occurrence in the history of Bologna, mentioned by Machiavel, which is an instance of the necessity felt by the people themselves for something to hold by which may put an end to the evils of perpetual inconstancy. After very bloody dissensions between two of the most powerful families in that city, the Canneschi and Bentivogli, which terminated in the expulsion of the former, and death of all the members of the latter except a child of six years old —the Bolognese were quite at a loss how to go-

vern themselves. At last some one most opportunely declared, that there was living in Tuscany a young man, a natural son of an individual of that house, and who, as he said, was in fact so like the late Hercules Bentivogli, that there could be no doubt of the latter being his father. Whereupon a solemn embassy was sent to Florence to entreat the youth to come and manage the government of Bologna, who, after some hesitation, abandoned his trade in woollens, to become almost the prince of a flourishing community, which, it is added, he ruled with great prudence and honour to the day of his death. Istor. Fior. lib. vi.

Note E.

In his speech to Congress, (December 1835) the President Jackson, prompted no doubt by the late disturbances in the United States, insists strongly on the necessity of an efficient organization of the militia. This is not the first time that such recommendations have been made by the executive to the representatives of the

American people. According to the present law, three days' service, I believe, is required of every citizen during the year. So unpopular, however, is this regulation, so great the distaste among the Americans to withdraw even for so short a time from the business of their fields, their shops, and their counting-houses, that the measure has never been fairly put in practice. The militia has, in fact, become in many parts a mere subject of ridicule, which it has been the interest of those who dislike the service, greatly to increase. Happily for America, there has as yet been little occasion for this or any other force; but should disturbances, such as we have lately seen, continue to spread, which, as the country becomes more populous must always be in a degree expected, some sort of armed body will become absolutely necessary. But a standing army being directly at variance with the nature of republican institutions, as the military president himself allows, nothing remains but to have recourse to an efficient militia. Should, then, the present distaste to serve, still continue, unhappy indeed would be the prospects of that country. It is very easy to adore Liberty, so long as the worship demands no sacrifice; but when time must be given up, pursuits inter-

rupted, and even danger incurred, then it is that republican ardour is put to the test. A people who should refuse to forget for a short period their pecuniary interests, when the good of the state required, who, being completely immersed in the business of money-making, should object to bear the musket, and content themselves with depositing secretly their vote in a ballot-box, would be utterly unworthy of democratic institutions. The general arming of the people being the very corner-stone of republicanism, we cannot expect to secure the end, without sufficient public spirit cordially to embrace the means. Every thing in life is bought at a price, and this is the purchase-money of popular rule. Under a limited monarchy, such as that of Great Britain, this sacrifice of personal ease is not required; for a standing and mercenary force may there be employed without danger; but in a republic it is otherwise.

Accustomed as we are to live beneath a different form of government, we have little idea of the degree of self-denial, and consequently of virtue, indispensable in a purely popular state. We therefore do not at once enter into the necessity for those qualities, so much dwelt upon by the ancient Greeks and Romans as essential

to a free people; that public spirit, that contempt of personal ease when country calls, and, I may add, that despising of luxury and of over-anxiety in the pursuit of wealth. The instance above given may serve as one example of the self-sacrifice which a republic demands of its citizens. And as to Luxury and love of Wealth, be it observed, that they do not prevent a man from serving his country well as a hired soldier, but are extremely adverse to voluntary and gratuitous exertions. Take a scion of aristocracy, for example, who has passed his youth immersed in all the dissipation of the capital, and give him a commission in the army, perhaps he will prove as good a soldier when roused by military glory, and the hope of gaining wealth and honour in his profession, as if he had formerly led an orderly life. But tell him to quit his favourite haunts, to change all his habits, to rise early, perhaps to watch all night with a musket on his shoulder, and that too without any reward either in money or reputation, and what will then be his conduct? So is it with the merchant whose thoughts are absorbed in the pursuit of riches. Say to a man of this sort, you must desert your business, shut up your ledger, leave your wife and family, your Turkey

carpets, easy chair, and goblets sparkling with champaign, and take the field at your country's call. This call, I fear, would be heard in vain. In Switzerland, where a republic is not a name, all young men arrived at a certain age, are obliged to encamp or go into barracks for six weeks, apart from their families and all their ordinary occupations, in order to learn military exercise, and every succeeding year they are bound to appear in arms for a shorter period.* Now, go and bid a West end fop, or city merchant, to pitch his tent on Hounslow Heath, will he lend to your words an attentive ear?

These considerations may serve to convince us, that the ancients were not in the wrong in dwelling so much on the necessity of patriotism, virtue—that branch of it in particular, which consists in self-denial for the public good—and on the dangers of Luxury and the Love of Wealth. For, these reflections refer to republics, not to limited monarchies, and are as applicable now to such a form of government as they were then. In America, at the present day, Love of Wealth is the great obstacle to the esta-

* For a month, until the age of 45. This is besides the numerous meetings of troops, when military evolutions are gone through on a grand scale.

blishment of an effective militia. And though, in a country, where, from a very peculiar set of circumstances, there have hitherto been neither foreign nor domestic enemies to dread, no great evil has yet resulted from such a dereliction of public duty; this happy state of things cannot be expected always to last, especially when the land shall be crowded with populous and manufacturing towns, or if any cause should disunite the present Confederacy.

There can be no doubt that the institution of the National Guard in a neighbouring kingdom, has been greatly favoured by the peculiar habits of the French, fond of military pomp, of which a militia affords an image, and, moreover, not *exclusively* devoted to the pursuit of wealth. For though the service of the National Guard is felt severely by many, especially in time of danger,* yet the amusement and importance it

* I cannot help relating in this place, an anecdote, which, though an individual case, may, I dare say, be applied in other instances. Not long after the revolution of July, a shop-keeper's wife was asked by a friend of mine, whether she was not very uneasy, when her husband, a National Guardsman, went out to keep the peace during those times of trouble. To which she replied, with wonderful simplicity, "Oh, not at all; when there is any danger, he always comes home." I perceive that a bill has just been

gives are no slight compensation to a gay and warlike people.

It appears, then, that one of the obstacles to the establishment and permanence of a republic, is the uncommon degree of virtue which it requires. And I am the more anxious to dwell on this point, since a school of philosophers has arisen in our day, who maintain self-interest to be a principle quite sufficient whereon to raise and support any form of government, however popular. To this I have to answer, that either the question between them and myself is merely one of words, or else, in my opinion, they are entirely in the wrong. For if they so far extend the signification of the term self-interest, as to take in that long-sightedness and power of resisting present temptation, which prompt and enable us to pursue what in the long run is our chief good in spite of all allurements to the contrary; then, indeed, self-interest is nothing but another name for virtue, at least for one branch of the same. For Self-denial, with a view to an ultimate good, either to ourselves or others, is Virtue. All that can be said, then, on this sup-

laid before the Chamber of Deputies, by the Minister, to enforce the more regular attendance of the men. (June 1836.)

position, against those with whom I am now arguing, is, that they give to a certain word, a signification not warranted by the common use of language. But if they take the term in its more limited and ordinary sense, then it may be confidently affirmed that they widely err. For, in the case of militia service, above mentioned, love of ease, of personal comfort, pecuniary interest, regard to self-preservation, all urge a man to stay quietly at home, and leave to others the care of the public peace. Nothing but a calculation of what upon the whole would be the consequences of disorder to himself, supposing the rioters to go unmolested, can induce him so far to forego his present gratification, as to descend into the street with a musket on his shoulder. Now, even this, as we have seen, is an exercise of virtue, not an act of self-interest *as commonly understood.* But how far this principle of enlightened self-interest would suffice for these deeds of self-denial and courage, may well be questioned. At all events, carried to this extent, it is by no means very common, except in some remarkable communities. Nay, I think it may well be doubted how far the *real* interest of any person would justify him in turning out in times of danger. For though it be certainly for

the good of the community in general, particularly of those who possess some wealth, that a numerous body should present themselves in arms against the enemies of the public tranquillity; yet as the force of one man is but small, each individual may judge very rationally, that by exposing himself to the danger of being shot, he runs into a greater evil than that to which he is liable from any slight increase of power which the revolt may gain from his absence. Therefore we arrive at the conclusion, that even the most far-sighted self-interest is not sufficient. We must consequently have recourse to patriotism, public spirit, desire of doing one's duty; all which are modifications of the great principle of benevolence. Thus we come to the result, that a high degree of virtue, taken in its most extended sense of self-denial, not for our private good only, but also for that of others, is necessary to the maintenance of republican institutions. Hence one very great obstacle to the setting up, much more to the continuance of any purely popular government. For nothing which is rare can ever be a sure basis whereon to build, *in general*, the political structure.

Unquestionably, some stirring impulse, some generous emotion, distinct from a calm unimpas-

sioned review of his ultimate advantage, is necessary to induce any one in times of peril to hazard his safety without hope of distinction or pecuniary reward. Can we suppose that revolutionary France could have repelled fourteen invading armies by a cool calculation in the breast of each individual of the evils of a field of battle, as compared with those of a foreign yoke? Or that Leonidas and his Spartans could, on such grounds, have devoted themselves to a certain death at Thermopylæ, and the Greeks in general have effectually resisted the countless hosts of Persia? Nothing but an enthusiasm for country and for liberty could have worked such wonders.

I think I cannot better conclude this long note than by the following extract from Bishop Butler. "Now I say, virtue in a society has a like tendency to procure superiority and additional power: whether this power be considered as the means of security from opposite power, or of obtaining other advantages. And it has this tendency, by rendering public good an object and end to every member of the society: and by putting every one on consideration and diligence, recollection and self-government, both in order to see what is the most effectual method, and also

in order to perform their proper part for obtaining and preserving it; by uniting a society within itself, and so increasing its strength; and which is particularly to be mentioned, uniting it by means of veracity and justice. For as these last are principal bonds of union, so benevolence or public spirit, undirected, unrestrained by them, is nobody knows what." Analogy of Religion, part i. chap. 3.

Note F.

I consider the French Revolution of July 1830 as a remarkable proof how formidable to tyranny is a population trained to arms. Though the National Guard of Paris had been disbanded three years before, yet the people cannot be supposed in that time to have lost all their military habits. And what is perhaps much more to the purpose, almost every man in Paris of a certain age, belonging to the middle and lower ranks, had served at one time or other in the wars of Napoleon. Thus the population of the capital was really composed of old soldiers, which suffi-

ciently explains the bravery and conduct with which they fought. There is some difference between a city of this description, and a town peopled by weavers and cotton-spinners who never saw a shot fired. When Rome sank under imperial despotism, it was no longer, as in ancient times, a vast camp; and Florence, in more modern days, never came under the dominion of one powerful family, until the mass of the inhabitants had for a long time ceased to bear arms.

Note G.

It is exceedingly remarkable that Machiavel should even in his time have decided in favour of the union of the three powers, as constituting the best form of civil government. His chief instance of the success of this system is Sparta, which existed, as he says, under the institutions of Lycurgus, with great glory and internal peace, for a period of more than 800 years. By these institutions, royalty, aristocracy, and democracy had each their share of power. And though the above writer seems to have exaggerated, by at

least one hundred years, the real duration of that scheme established by the Lacedemonian lawgiver, yet the whole continuance of the Spartan government under its double dynasty of kings was fully equal to what he has stated. The era of the reformation of the government by Lycurgus is fixed by some at 884 B. C., by others, at 845. Its final termination was in 179 B. C. when the tyrant Nabis drove away from Lacedæmon all that remained of the ancient families, and caused them to be assassinated in their exile. Taking the latest epoch mentioned for Lycurgus, the total duration of his system, even on this supposition, was 666 years. With this, Machiavel contrasts the state of Athens, whose very democratic constitution was overthrown even in the life-time of its author by Pisistratus; and though after forty years again established, yet, as he observes, did it not endure subsequently much more than a hundred. "Perchè non la le (the democratic institutions) mescolò con la potenza del Principato, e con quella delli Ottimati, visse Atene, a rispetto di Sparta, brevissimo tempo." Discorsi, lib. i. cap. 2.

These hundred years bring us to the time of the thirty tyrants. After that, the democracy again revived, and continued till the battle of

Chæronea. Previous, however, to the thirty imposed by Lysander, there had been a tyranny of four hundred.

We should naturally be led to suppose that a *body* of men would be capable of greater tyranny than *one*, on account of the divided moral responsibility. Perhaps it would be impossible to fix upon any more sanguinary despotisms while they lasted, than those of the four hundred and of the thirty at Athens just alluded to, and that of the Committee of Public Safety in France. If we may believe Xenophon, (Histor. lib. 2.) the thirty put to death more people in eight months of peace, than the enemy had slain in ten years' war. But this, I think, must be an exaggeration. Who has not heard of the *Fournées* of the Terrour?

The noble conduct of the Athenian people after the expulsion of the thirty deserves here to be mentioned. Notwithstanding the horrid tyranny to which they had just been a prey, they agreed, on the motion of Thrasybulus, to a general amnesty and total forgetfulness of the past. This is one of the finest traits in ancient history.

The circumstance of divided moral responsibility will tend to render a numerous judicial tribunal much more severe in its decisions than

a single judge, or two or three, should the members have any passion or interest to gratify. Scarcely any individual, or very small body, could have been got to condemn to death Charles I. or Louis XVI.; and nothing but an assembly such as the French Chamber of Peers, would have sacrificed the gallant Ney, the idol of the army and of the nation at large. The late trials of the April prisoners, many of whom have been condemned to twenty years and under of hard labour at the hulks; and even that of Fieschi and his accomplices, is a further proof of the same. For notwithstanding the general belief in the guilt of his two associates, it is certain that no decisive proof was brought against them; none which would have induced a jury of twelve men to send them to the scaffold. The spectacle of two or three hundred persons voting away the life of an individual, as they would a law, and that too by ballot, has in it something very revolting.

Note H.

The proof of the difficulty of subduing mountainous countries rests upon a broad basis of experience. Witness Spain, which cost the Romans more trouble than any other country whatsoever, and was not finally subdued till after about two hundred years, from the first expedition of the Scipios down even to the time of Augustus; Liguria, which was completely conquered only by transplanting the inhabitants; Greece, which in all ages has stoutly resisted its foes; Switzerland; the Tyrol, whose brave opposition to the arms of Napoleon is still so recent; Scotland, whose independent existence for centuries in the neighbourhood of a country so greatly superior to itself in extent and riches, and cut off by its position from all immediate aid, is most remarkable; lastly, Circassia, which, as appears by late accounts, has for fifty years been waging a most unequal war against the mighty force of the Russian empire. Spain is also remarkable for having given the first check to the career of Napoleon; and the contest now carrying on in the Biscayan provinces, shews how great are the obstacles to their subjugation.

ERRATA.

Page 3. *for* along the plane, *read*, along to the plain.
—— 8. *for* eilgible, *read*, eligible.
—— 11. *for* Publius, *read*, Publilius.

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